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SONGS FROM BOOKS

Books by Rudyard Kipling

- ACTIONS. AND REACTIONS
BRUSHWOOD BOY, THE
CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS
COLLECTED VERSE
DAY'S WORK, THE
DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES
AND BALLADS AND BAR-
RACK-ROOM BALLADS
FIVE NATIONS, THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND, A
JUNGLE BOOK, THE
JUNGLE BOOK, SECOND
JUST SO SONG BOOK
JUST SO STORIES
KIM
KIPLING STORIES AND
POEMS EVERY CHILD
SHOULD KNOW
KIPLING BIRTHDAY BOOK,
THE
LIFE'S HANDICAP: BEING
STORIES OF MINE OWN
PEOPLE
LIGHT THAT FAILED, THE
MANY INVENTIONS
NAULAHKA, THE (WITH
WOLCOTT BALESTIER)
PLAIN TALES FROM THE
HILLS
PUCK OF POOK'S HILL
REWARDS AND FAIRIES
SEA TO SEA, FROM
SEVEN SEAS, THE
SOLDIER STORIES
SOLDIERS THREE, THE
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AND IN BLACK AND WHITE
SONG OF THE ENGLISH, THE
STALKY & Co.
THEY
TRAFFICS AND DISCOVERIES
UNDER THE DEODARS,
THE PHANTOM RICK-
SHAW, AND WEE WILLIE
WINKIE
WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

Songs From Books

By Rudyard Kipling



GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
1912

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PREFACE

I have collected in this volume practically all the verses and chapter-headings scattered through my books, with the exception of the Jungle Books and the Just So Stories. In several cases where only a few lines of verse were originally used I have given in full the song, etc., from which they were taken.

Rudyard Kipling

Figure 1 consists of four maps of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, labeled (a) through (d), showing the spatial distribution of different types of land use/cover change (LUCC) from 1985 to 2010. The maps use a color scale to represent the magnitude of change in square kilometers (km²), ranging from 0 to 1000. Map (a) shows agricultural land converted to urban land, with higher concentrations in the eastern and central parts of the region. Map (b) shows agricultural land converted to forest land, with higher concentrations in the western and northern parts. Map (c) shows agricultural land converted to water bodies, with higher concentrations in the southern and eastern parts. Map (d) shows agricultural land converted to other land uses, with higher concentrations in the central and eastern parts.

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CITIES AND THRONES AND POWERS

*Cities and Thrones and Powers,
Stand in Time's eye,
Almost as long as flowers,
Which daily die;
But, as new buds put forth
To glad new men,
Out of the spent and unconsidered Earth
The Cities rise again.*

*This season's Daffodil,
She never hears,
What change, what chance, what chill,
Cut down last year's:
But with bold countenance,
And knowledge small,
Esteems her seven days' continuance,
To be perpetual.*

*So Time that is o'er-kind,
To all that be,
Ordains us e'en as blind,
As bold as she:
That in our very death,
And burial sure,
Shadow to shadow, well-persuaded, saith,
“ See how our works endure !”*

SONGS FROM BOOKS

Songs from Books

THE RECALL

I am the land of their fathers,
In me the virtue stays.
I will bring back my children,
After certain days.

Under their feet in the grasses
My clinging magic runs.
They shall return as strangers,
They shall remain as sons.

Over their heads in the branches
Of their new-bought, ancient trees,
I weave an incantation
And draw them to my knees.

Scent of smoke in the evening,
Smell of rain in the night,

The hours, the days and the seasons,
Order their souls aright;

Till I make plain the meaning
Of all my thousand years —
Till I fill their hearts with knowledge,
While I fill their eyes with tears.

PUCK'S SONG

See you the ferny ride that steals
Into the oak-woods far?
O that was whence they hewed the keels
That rolled to Trafalgar.

And mark you where the ivy clings
To Bayham's mouldering walls?
O there we cast the stout railings
That stand around St. Paul's.

See you the dimpled track that runs
All hollow through the wheat?
O that was where they hauled the guns
That smote King Philip's fleet.

Out of the Weald, the secret Weald,
Men sent in ancient years,
The horse-shoes red at Flodden Field,
The arrows at Poitiers.

See you our little mill that clacks,
So busy by the brook?
She has ground her corn and paid her tax
Ever since Domesday Book.

See you our stilly woods of oak?
And the dread ditch beside?
O that was where the Saxons broke
On the day that Harold died.

See you the windy levels spread
About the gates of Rye?
O that was where the Northmen fled,
When Alfred's ships came by.

See you our pastures wide and lone,
Where the red oxen browse?
O there was a City thronged and known,
Ere London boasted a house.

And see you, after rain, the trace
Of mound and ditch and wall?
O that was a Legion's camping-place,
When Cæsar sailed from Gaul.

And see you marks that show and fade,
Like shadows on the Downs?
O they are the lines the Flint Men made,
To guard their wondrous towns.

Trackway and Camp and City lost,
Salt Marsh where now is corn;
Old Wars, old Peace, old Arts that cease,
And so was England born!

She is not any common Earth,
Water or wood or air,
But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye,
Where you and I will fare.

THE WAY THROUGH THE WOODS

They shut the road through the woods
Seventy years ago.

Weather and rain have undone it again,
And now you would never know

There was once a road through the woods
Before they planted the trees.

It is underneath the coppice and heath,
And the thin anemones.

Only the keeper sees

That, where the ring-dove broods,

And the badgers roll at ease,

There was once a road through the woods.

Yet, if you enter the woods

Of a summer evening late,

When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed
pools

Where the otter whistles his mate

(They fear not men in the woods,

Because they see so few),

You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,
Steadily cantering through
The misty solitudes,
As though they perfectly knew
The old lost road through the woods . . .
But there is no road through the woods.

A THREE-PART SONG

I'm just in love with all these three,
The Weald and the Marsh and the Down coun-
trie;
Nor I don't know which I love the most,
The Weald or the Marsh or the white chalk
coast!

I've buried my heart in a ferny hill,
Twix' a liddle low shaw an' a great high gill.
Oh hop-bine yaller an' wood-smoke blue,
I reckon you'll keep her middling true!

I've loosed my mind for to out and run
On a Marsh that was old when Kings begun.
Oh Romney Level and Brenzett reeds,
I reckon you know what my mind needs!

I've given my soul to the Southdown grass,
And sheep-bells tinkled where you pass.
Oh Firle an' Ditchling an' sails at sea,
I reckon you keep my soul for me!

THE RUN OF THE DOWNS

*The Weald is good, the Downs are best —
I'll give you the run of 'em, East to West.*
Beachy Head and Winddoor Hill,
They were once and they are still,
Firle, Mount Caburn and Mount Harry
Go back as far as sums 'll carry.
Ditchling Beacon and Chanctonbury Ring,
They have looked on many a thing,
And what those two have missed between 'em
I reckon Truleigh Hill has seen 'em.
Highden, Bignor and Duncton Down
Knew Old England before the Crown.
Linch Down, Treyford and Sunwood
Knew Old England before the Flood.
And when you end on the Hampshire side —
Butser's old as Time and Tide.
*The Downs are sheep, the Weald is corn,
You be glad you are Sussex born!*

BROOKLAND ROAD

I was very well pleased with what I knowed,
I reckoned myself no fool —
Till I met with a maid on the Brookland Road,
That turned me back to school.

Low down — low down!
Where the liddle green lanterns shine —
O maids, I've done with 'ee all but one,
And she can never be mine!

'Twas right in the midst of a hot June night,
With thunder duntin' round,
And I see'd her face by the fairy light
That beats from off the ground.

She only smiled and she never spoke,
She smiled and went away;
But when she'd gone my heart was broke
And my wits was clean astray.

O, stop your ringing and let me be —
Let be, O Brookland bells!
You'll ring Old Goodman* out of the sea,
Before I wed one else!

Old Goodman's Farm is rank sea sand,
And was this thousand year;
But it shall turn to rich plough land
Before I change my dear.

O, Fairfield Church is water-bound
From autumn to the spring;
But it shall turn to high hill ground
Before my bells do ring.

O, leave me walk on the Brookland Road,
In the thunder and warm rain —
O, leave me look where my love goed,
And p'raps I'll see her again!

Low down — low down!
Where the liddle green lanterns shine —
O maids, I've done with 'ee all but one,
And she can never be mine!

*Earl Godwin of the Goodwin Sands?

THE SACK OF THE GODS

Strangers drawn from the ends of the earth,
jewelled and plumed were we;

I was Lord of the Inca race, and she was Queen
of the Sea.

Under the stars beyond our stars where the new-
forged meteors glow,

Hotly we stormed Valhalla, a million years ago.

*Ever 'neath high Valhalla Hall the well-tuned
horns begin*

*When the swords are out in the underworld, and
the weary Gods come in.*

*Ever through high Valhalla Gate the Patient Angel
goes*

*He opens the eyes that are blind with hate — he
joins the hands of foes.*

Dust of the stars was under our feet, glitter of
stars above —

Wrecks of our wrath dropped reeling down as
we fought and we spurned and we strove.
Worlds upon worlds we tossed aside, and scat-
tered them to and fro,
The night that we stormed Valhalla, a million
years ago!

*They are forgiven as they forgive all those dark
wounds and deep,
Their beds are made on the lap of Time and they
lie down and sleep.
They are forgiven as they forgive all those old
wounds that bleed,
They shut their eyes from their worshippers.
They sleep till the world has need.*

She with the star I had marked for my own — I
with my set desire —
Lost in the loom of the Night of Nights —
lighted by worlds afire —
Met in a war against the Gods where the head-
long meteors glow,
Hewing our way to Valhalla, a million years
ago!

*They will come back — come back again, as long
as the red Earth rolls.*

*He never wasted a leaf or a tree. Do you think
He would squander souls?*

THE KINGDOM

Now we are come to our Kingdom,
And the State is thus and thus;
Our legions wait at the Palace gate —
Little it profits us,
Now we are come to our Kingdom!

Now we are come to our Kingdom,
And the Crown is ours to take —
With a naked sword at the Council board,
And under the throne the snake,
Now we are come to our Kingdom!

Now we are come to our Kingdom,
And the Realm is ours by right,
With shame and fear for our daily cheer,
And heaviness at night,
Now we are come to our Kingdom!

Now we are come to our Kingdom,
But my love's eyelids fall.
All that I wrought for, all that I fought for,

Delight her nothing at all.

My crown is of withered leaves,

For she sits in the dust and grieves,

Now we are come to our Kingdom!

TARRANT MOSS

I closed and drew for my love's sake
That now is false to me,
And I slew the Reiver of Tarrant Moss
And set Dumeny free.

They have gone down, they have gone down,
They are standing all arow —
Twenty knights in the peat-water,
That never struck a blow!

Their armour shall not dull nor rust,
Their flesh shall not decay,
For Tarrant Moss holds them in trust,
Until the Judgment Day.

Their soul went from them in their youth,
Ah God, that mine had gone,
Whenas I leaned on my love's truth
And not on my sword alone!

Whenas I leaned on lad's belief
And not on my naked blade —
And I slew a thief, and an honest thief,
For the sake of a worthless maid.

They have laid the Reiver low in his place,
They have set me up on high,
But the twenty knights in the peat-water
Are luckier than I.

And ever they give me gold and praise
And ever I mourn my loss —
For I struck the blow for my false love's sake
And not for the Men of the Moss!

SIR RICHARD'S SONG

(A. D. 1066)

I followed my Duke ere I was a lover,
To take from England fief and fee;
But now this game is the other way over —
But now England hath taken me!

I had my horse, my shield and banner,
And a boy's heart, so whole and free;
But now I sing in another manner —
But now England hath taken me!

As for my Father in his tower,
Asking news of my ship at sea;
He will remember his own hour —
Tell him England hath taken me!

As for my Mother in her bower,
That rules my Father so cunningly,
She will remember a maiden's power —
Tell her England hath taken me!

As for my Brother in Rouen City,
A nimble and naughty page is he,
But he will come to suffer and pity —
Tell him England hath taken me!

As for my little Sister waiting
In the pleasant orchards of Normandie,
Tell her youth is the time for mating —
Tell her England hath taken me!

As for my Comrades in camp and highway,
That lift their eyebrows scornfully,
Tell them their way is not my way —
Tell them England hath taken me!

Kings and Princes and Barons famèd,
Knights and Captains in your degree;
Hear me a little before I am blamed —
Seeing England hath taken me!

Howso great man's strength be reckoned,
There are two things he cannot flee;
Love is the first, and Death is the second —
And Love in England hath taken me!

A TREE SONG

(A. D. 1200)

Of all the trees that grow so fair,
Old England to adorn,
Greater are none beneath the Sun,
Than Oak, and Ash, and Thorn.
Sing Oak, and Ash, and Thorn, good sirs
(All of a Midsummer morn!)
Surely we sing no little thing,
In Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Oak of the Clay lived many a day,
Or ever Æneas began;
Ash of the Loam was a lady at home,
When Brut was an outlaw man.
Thorn of the Down saw New Troy Town
(From which was London born);
Witness hereby the ancientry
Of Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Yew that is old in churchyard mould,
He breedeth a mighty bow.

Alder for shoes do wise men choose,
And beech for cups also.
But when ye have killed, and your bowl is
spilled,
And your shoes are clean outworn,
Back ye must speed for all that ye need,
To Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Ellum she hateth mankind, and waiteth
Till every gust be laid,
To drop a limb on the head of him
That anyway trusts her shade:
But whether a lad be sober or sad,
Or mellow with ale from the horn,
He will take no wrong when he lieth along
'Neath Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Oh, do not tell the Priest our plight,
Or he would call it a sin;
But — we have been out in the woods all
night,
A-conjuring Summer in!
And we bring you news by word of mouth —
Good news for cattle and corn —

Now is the Sun come up from the South,
With Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

Sing Oak, and Ash, and Thorn, good sirs
(All of a Midsummer morn!)

England shall bide till Judgment Tide,
By Oak, and Ash, and Thorn!

CUCKOO SONG

(Spring begins in Southern England on the 14th April, on which date the Old Woman lets the Cuckoo out of her basket at Heathfield Fair — locally known as Heffle Cuckoo Fair)

Tell it to the locked-up trees,
Cuckoo, bring your song here!
Warrant, Act and Summons, please,
For Spring to pass along here!
Tell old Winter, if he doubt,
Tell him squat and square — a!
Old Woman!
Old Woman!
Old Woman's let the Cuckoo out
At Heffle Cuckoo Fair — a!

March has searched and April tried —
'Tisn't long to May now.
Not so far to Whitsuntide
And Cuckoo's come to stay now!
Hear the valiant fellow shout
Down the orchard bare — a!
Old Woman!
Old Woman!
Old Woman's let the Cuckoo out
At Heffle Cuckoo Fair — a!

When your heart is young and gay
And the season rules it —
Work your works and play your play
'Fore the Autumn cools it!
Kiss you turn and turn about,
But my lad, beware — a!
Old Woman!
Old Woman!
Old Woman's let the Cuckoo out
At Heffle Cuckoo Fair — a!

A CHARM

Take of English earth as much
As either hand may rightly clutch.
In the taking of it breathe
Prayer for all who lie beneath.
Not the great nor well-bespoke,
But the mere uncounted folk
Of whose life and death is none
Report or lamentation.

Lay that earth upon thy heart,
And thy sickness shall depart!

It shall sweeten and make whole
Fevered breath and festered soul;
It shall mightily restrain
Over-busy hand and brain;
It shall ease thy mortal strife
'Gainst the immortal woe of life,
Till thyself restored shall prove
By what grace the Heavens do move.

Take of English flowers these —
Spring's full-facèd primroses,
Summer's wild wide-hearted rose,
Autumn's wall-flower of the close,
And, thy darkness to illume,
Winter's bee-thronged ivy-bloom.
Seek and serve them where they bide
From Candlemas to Christmas-tide,
For these simples, used aright,
Can restore a failing sight.

These shall cleanse and purify
Webbed and inward-turning eye;
These shall show thee treasure hid,
Thy familiar fields amid;
And reveal (which is thy need)
Every man a King indeed!

THE PRAIRIE

“I see the grass shake in the sun for leagues on
either hand,

I see a river loop and run about a treeless land —
An empty plain, a steely pond, a distance
diamond-clear,

And low blue naked hills beyond. And what is
that to fear?”

“Go softly by that river-side or, when you
would depart,

You'll find its every winding tied and knotted
round your heart.

Be wary as the seasons pass, or you may ne'er
outrun

The wind that sets that yellowed grass a-shiver
'neath the Sun.”

“I hear the summer storm outblown — the
drip of the grateful wheat.

I hear the hard trail telephone a far-off horse's
feet.

I hear the horns of Autumn blow to the wild-
fowl overhead;

And I hear the hush before the snow. And
what is that to dread?"

"Take heed what spell the lightning weaves —
what charm the echoes shape —

Or, bound among a million sheaves, your soul
may not escape.

Bar home the door of summer nights lest those
high planets drown

The memory of near delights in all the longed-
for town."

"What need have I to long or fear? Now,
friendly, I behold

My faithful seasons robe the year in silver and
in gold.

Now I possess and am possessed of the land
where I would be,

And the curve of half Earth's generous breast
shall soothe and ravish me!"

COLD IRON

*“Gold is for the mistress — silver for the maid —
Copper for the craftsman cunning at his trade.”*

“Good!” said the Baron, sitting in his hall,
“But Iron — Cold Iron — is master of them
all.”

So he made rebellion 'gainst the King his liege,
Camped before his citadel and summoned it to
siege.

“Nay!” said the cannoneer on the castle wall,
“But Iron — Cold Iron — shall be master of
you all!”

Woe for the Baron and his knights so strong,
When the cruel cannon-balls laid 'em all along!
He was taken prisoner, he was cast in thrall,
And Iron — Cold Iron — was master of it all.

Yet his King spake kindly (ah, how kind a
Lord!)

“What if I release thee now and give thee back
thy sword?”

“Nay!” said the Baron, “mock not at my fall,
For Iron — Cold Iron — is master of men all.”

*“Tears are for the craven, prayers are for the
clown —*

Halters for the silly neck that cannot keep a crown.”

“As my loss is grievous, so my hope is small,
For Iron — Cold Iron — must be master of
men all!”

Yet his King made answer (few such Kings
there be!)

“Here is Bread and here is Wine — sit and
sup with me.

Eat and drink in Mary’s Name, the whiles I
do recall

How Iron — Cold Iron — can be master of
men all!”

He took the Wine and blessed It. He blessed
and brake the Bread.

With His own Hands He served Them, and
presently He said:

“See! These Hands they pierced with nails
outside My city wall

Show Iron — Cold Iron — to be master of men
all!

“Wounds are for the desperate, blows are for
the strong,

Balm and oil for weary hearts all cut and bruised
with wrong.

I forgive thy treason — I redeem thy fall —
For Iron — Cold Iron — must be master of
men all!”

*“Crowns are for the valiant — sceptres for the
bold!*

*Thrones and powers for mighty men who dare
to take and hold.”*

“Nay!” said the Baron, kneeling in his hall,
“But Iron — Cold Iron — is master of man all!
Iron out of Calvary is master of men all!”

A CAROL

Our Lord Who did the Ox command

To kneel to Judah's King,

He binds His frost upon the land

To ripen it for Spring —

To ripen it for Spring, good sirs,

According to His Word.

Which well must be as ye can see —

And who shall judge the Lord?

When we poor fenmen skate the ice

Or shiver on the wold,

We hear the cry of a single tree

That breaks her heart in the cold —

That breaks her heart in the cold, good sirs,

And rendeth by the board.

Which well must be as ye can see —

And who shall judge the Lord?

Her wood is crazed and little worth

Excepting as to burn,

That we may warm and make our mirth
Until the Spring return —
Until the Spring return, good sirs,
When people walk abroad.
Which well must be as ye can see —
And who shall judge the Lord?

God bless the master of this house,
And all that sleep therein!
And guard the fens from pirate folk,
And keep us all from sin,
To walk in honesty, good sirs,
Of thought and deed and word!
Which shall befriend our latter end —
And who shall judge the Lord?

“MY NEW CUT ASHLAR’

My new cut ashlar takes the light
Where crimson-blank the windows flare.
By my own work before the night,
Great Overseer, I make my prayer.

If there be good in that I wrought
Thy Hand compelled it, Master, Thine —
Where I have failed to meet Thy Thought
I know, through Thee, the blame was mine.

The depth and dream of my desire,
The bitter paths wherein I stray —
Thou knowest Who hast made the Fire,
Thou knowest Who hast made the Clay.

Who, lest all thought of Eden fade,
Bring'st Eden to the craftsman's brain —
Godlike to muse o'er his own Trade
And manlike stand with God again!

One stone the more swings into place
In that dread Temple of Thy worth.
It is enough that through Thy Grace
I saw nought common in Thy Earth.

Take not that vision from my ken —
Oh whatsoe'er may spoil or speed.
Help me to need no aid from men
That I may help such men as need!

EDDI'S SERVICE

(A. D. 687)

Eddi, priest of St. Wilfrid

In the chapel at Manhood End,
Ordered a midnight service
For such as cared to attend.

But the Saxons were keeping Christmas,
And the night was stormy as well.
Nobody came to service
Though Eddi rang the bell.

“Wicked weather for walking,”
Said Eddi of Manhood End.
“But I must go on with the service
For such as care to attend.”

The altar-candles were lighted, —
An old marsh donkey came,
Bold as a guest invited,
And stared at the guttering flame.

The storm beat on at the windows,
The water splashed on the floor,
And a wet yoke-weary bullock
Pushed in through the open door.

“How do I know what is greatest,
How do I know what is least?
That is My Father’s business,”
Said Eddi, Wilfrid’s priest.

“But — three are gathered together —
Listen to me and attend.
I bring good news, my brethren!”
Said Eddi of Manhood End.

And he told the Ox of a Manger
And a Stall in Bethlehem,
And he spoke to the Ass of a Rider,
That rode to Jerusalem.

They steamed and dripped in the chancel,
They listened and never stirred,
While, just as though they were Bishops,
Eddi preached them The Word.

Till the gale blew off on the marshes
And the windows showed the day,
And the Ox and the Ass together
Wheeled and clattered away.

And when the Saxons mocked him,
Said Eddi of Manhood End,
“I dare not shut His chapel
On such as care to attend.”

THE FAIRIES' SIEGE

I have been given my charge to keep —
Well have I kept the same!
Playing with strife for the most of my life,
But this is a different game.
I'll not fight against swords unseen,
Or spears that I cannot view —
Hand him the keys of the place on your knees
'Tis the Dreamer whose dreams come true!

Ask for his terms and accept them at once
Quick, ere we anger him, go!
Never before have I flinched from the guns,
But this is a different show.
I'll not fight with the Herald of God
(I know what his Master can do!)
Open the gate, he must enter in state,
'Tis the Dreamer whose dreams come true!

I'd not give way for an Emperor,
I'd hold my road for a King —

To the Triple Crown I would not bow down —
But this is a different thing.

I'll not fight with the Powers of Air,
Sentry, pass him through!

Drawbridge let fall, it's the Lord of us all,
The Dreamer whose dreams come true!

A SONG TO MITHRAS

(Hymn of the 30th Legion: *circa* 350 A. D.)

Mithras, God of the Morning, our trumpets
waken the Wall!

“Rome is above the Nations, but Thou art over
all!”

Now as the names are answered, and the guards
are marched away,

Mithras, also a soldier, give us strength for the
day!

Mithras, God of the Noontide, the heather
swims in the heat.

Our helmets scorch our foreheads, our sandals
burn our feet.

Now in the ungirt hour — now ere we blink
and drowse,

Mithras, also a soldier, keep us true to our vows!

Mithras, God of the Sunset, low on the Western
main —

Thou descending immortal, immortal to rise
again!

Now when the watch is ended, now when the
wine is drawn,
Mithras, also a soldier, keep us pure till the
dawn!

Mithras, God of the Midnight, here where the
great bull dies,
Look on thy children in darkness. Oh take our
sacrifice!
Many roads thou hast fashioned — all of them
lead to the Light,
Mithras, also a soldier, teach us to die aright!

THE NEW KNIGHTHOOD

Who gives him the Bath?

“I,” said the wet,
Rank Jungle-sweat,
“I’ll give him the Bath!”

Who’ll sing the psalms?

“We,” said the Palms.
“Ere the hot wind becalms,
We’ll sing the psalms.”

Who lays on the sword?

“I,” said the Sun,
“Before he has done,
I’ll lay on the sword.”

Who fastens his belt?

“I,” said Short-Rations,
“I know all the fashions
Of tightening a belt!”

Who gives him his spur?

“I,” said his Chief,

Exacting and brief,
“I’ll give him the spur.”

Who’ll shake his hand?
“I,” said the Fever,
“And I’m no deceiver,
I’ll shake his hand.”

Who brings him the wine?
“I,” said Quinine,
“It’s a habit of mine.
I’ll come with the wine.”

Who’ll put him to proof?
“I,” said All Earth,
“Whatever he’s worth,
I’ll put to the proof.”

Who’ll choose him for Knight?
“I,” said his Mother,
“Before any other,
My very own Knight.”

And after this fashion, adventure to seek,
Was Sir Galahad made — as it might be last
week!

HARP SONG OF THE DANE WOMEN

What is a woman that you forsake her,
And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,
To go with the old grey Widow-maker?

She has no house to lay a guest in —
But one chill bed for all to rest in,
That the pale suns and the stray bergs nest in.

She has no strong white arms to fold you,
But the ten-times-fingering weed to hold you —
Out on the rocks where the tide has rolled you.

Yet, when the signs of summer thicken,
And the ice breaks, and the birch-buds quicken,
Yearly you turn from our side, and sicken —

Sicken again for the shouts and the slaughters.
You steal away to the lapping waters,
And look at your ship in her winter quarters

You forget our mirth, and talk at the tables,
The kine in the shed and the horse in the
 stables —
To pitch her sides and go over her cables.

Then you drive out where the storm-clouds
 swallow,
And the sound of your oar-blades, falling hollow,
Is all we have left through the months to follow.

Ah, what is Woman that you forsake her,
And the hearth-fire and the home-acre,
To go with the old gray Widow-maker?

CHAPTER HEADINGS

Plain Tales from the Hills

Look, you have cast out Love! What Gods are
these

You bid me please?

The Three in One, the One in Three? Not so!

To my own Gods I go.

It may be they shall give me greater ease

Than your cold Christ and tangled Trinities.

Lispeth.

When the Earth was sick and the Skies were grey,

And the woods were rotted with rain,

The Dead Man rode through the autumn day

To visit his love again.

His love she neither saw nor heard,

So heavy was her shame;

And tho' the babe within her stirred

She knew not that he came.

The Other Man.

Cry "Murder" in the market-place and each
Will turn upon his neighbour anxious eyes
Asking;—"Art thou the man?" We hunted Cain
Some centuries ago across the world.
This bred the fear our own misdeeds maintain
To-day.

His Wedded Wife.

Go, stalk the red deer o'er the heather
Ride, follow the fox if you can!
But, for pleasure and profit together,
Allow me the hunting of Man —
The chase of the Human, the search for the Soul
To its ruin — the hunting of Man.

Pig.

"Stopped in the straight when the race was his
own!
Look at him cutting it — cur to the bone!"
Ask ere the youngster be rated and chidden
What did he carry and how was he ridden?
May be they used him too much at the start;
Maybe Fate's weight-cloths are breaking his
heart."

In the Pride of his Youth.

“And some are sulky, while some will plunge.
(*So ho! Steady! Stand still, you!*)

Some you must gentle, and some you must lunge.
(*There! There! Who wants to kill you?*)

Some — there are losses in every trade —
Will break their hearts ere bitted and made,
Will fight like fiends as the rope cuts hard,
And die dumb-mad in the breaking-yard.”

Thrown Away.

The World hath set its heavy yoke
Upon the old white-bearded folk
Who strive to please the King.
God’s mercy is upon the young,
God’s wisdom in the baby tongue
That fears not anything.

Tod’s Amendment.

Not though you die to-night, O Sweet, and wail,
A spectre at my door,
Shall mortal Fear make Love immortal fail —
I shall but love you more,
Who, from Death’s house returning, give me still
One moment’s comfort in my matchless ill.

By Word of Mouth.

They burnt a corpse upon the sand —
The light shone out afar;
It guided home the plunging boats
That beat from Zanzibar,
Spirit of Fire, where e'er Thy altars rise,
Thou art the Light of Guidance to our eyes!
In Error.

Ride with an idle whip, ride with an unused heel,
But, once in a way, there will come a day
When the colt must be taught to feel
The lash that falls, and the curb that galls, and
the sting of the rowelled steel.

The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggin.

It was not in the open fight
We threw away the sword,
But in the lonely watching
In the darkness by the ford,
The waters lapped, the night-wind blew,
Full-armed the Fear was born and grew,
From panic in the night.

The Rout of the White Hussars.

In the daytime, when she moved about me,
In the night, when she was sleeping at my side,—
I was wearied, I was wearied of her presence,
Day by day and night by night I grew to hate
her —

Would God that she or I had died!

The Bronckhorst Divorce Case.

A stone's throw out on either hand
From that well-ordered road we tread,
And all the world is wild and strange;
Churel and ghoul and Djinn and sprite
Shall bear us company to-night,
For we have reached the Oldest Land
Wherein the powers of Darkness range.

In the House of Suddhoo.

To-night, God knows what thing shall tide,
The Earth is racked and faint —
Expectant, sleepless, open-eyed;
And we, who from the Earth were made,
Thrill with our Mother's pain.

False Dawn.

Pit where the buffalo cooled his hide,
By the hot sun emptied, and blistered and dried;
Log in the reh-grass, hidden and lone;
Bund where the earth-rat's mounds are strown;
Cave in the bank where the sly stream steals;
Aloe that stabs at the belly and heels,
Jump if you dare on a steed untried —
Safer it is to go wide — go wide!
Hark, from in front where the best men ride; —
“Pull to the off, boys! Wide! Go wide!”

Cupid's Arrows.

He drank strong waters and his speech was
coarse
He purchased raiment and forebore to pay,
He stuck a trusting junior with a horse
And won gymkhanas in a doubtful way.
Then, 'twixt a vice and folly, turned aside
To do good deeds and straight to cloak them,
lied.

A Bank Fraud.

THE THOUSANDTH MAN

One man in a thousand, Solomon says,
Will stick more close than a brother.
And it's worth while seeking him half your days
If you find him before the other.
Nine hundred and ninety-nine depend
On what the world sees in you,
But the Thousandth Man will stand your friend
With the whole round world agin you.

'Tis neither promise nor prayer nor show
Will settle the finding for 'ee.
Nine hundred and ninety-nine of 'em go
By your looks or your acts or your glory.
But if he finds you and you find him,
The rest of the world don't matter;
For the Thousandth Man will sink or swim
With you in any water.

You can use his purse with no more talk
Than he uses yours for his spendings,

And laugh and meet in your daily walk
As though there had been no lendings.
Nine hundred and ninety-nine of 'em call
For silver and gold in their dealings;
But the Thousandth Man he's worth 'em all,
Because you can show him your feelings.

His wrong's your wrong, and his right's your
right,

In season or out of season.

Stand up and back it in all men's sight —

With *that* for your only reason!

Nine hundred and ninety-nine can't bide

The shame or mocking or laughter,

But the Thousandth Man will stand by your side

To the gallows-foot — and after!

THE WINNERS

What is the moral? Who rides may read.
When the night is thick and the tracks are blind
A friend at a pinch is a friend indeed,
But a fool to wait for the laggard behind.
Down to Gehenna or up to the Throne,
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

White hands cling to the tightened rein,
Slipping the spur from the booted heel,
Tenderest voices cry "Turn again,"
Red lips tarnish the scabbarded steel,
High hopes faint on a warm hearth stone —
He travels the fastest who travels alone.

One may fall but he falls by himself —
Falls by himself with himself to blame,
One may attain and to him is pelf,
Loot of the city in Gold or Fame.
Plunder of earth shall be all his own
Who travels the fastest and travels alone.

Wherefore the more ye be holpen and stayed
Stayed by a friend in the hour of toil,
Sing the heretical song I have made —
His be the labour and yours be the spoil
Win by his aid and the aid disown —
He travels the fastest who travels alone!

A ST. HELENA LULLABY

“How far is St. Helena from a little child at play?”

What makes you want to wander there with all the world between?

Oh, Mother, call your son again or else he'll run away.

(No one thinks of winter when the grass is green!)

“How far is St. Helena from a fight in Paris street?”

I haven't time to answer now — the men are falling fast.

The guns begin to thunder, and the drums begin to beat.

(If you take the first step you will take the last!)

“How far is St. Helena from the field of Austerlitz?”

You couldn't hear me if I told — so loud the cannons roar.

But not so far for people who are living by their wits.

(“Gay go up” means “Gay go down” the wide world o’er!)

“How far is St. Helena from an Emperor of France?”

I cannot see — I cannot tell — the crowns they dazzle so.

The Kings sit down to dinner, and the Queens stand up to dance.

(After open weather you may look for snow!)

“How far is St. Helena from the Capes of Trafalgar?”

A longish way — a longish way — with ten year more to run.

It’s South across the water underneath a setting star.

(What you cannot finish you must leave undone!)

“How far is St. Helena from the Beresina ice?”

An ill way — a chill way — the ice begins to crack.

But not so far for gentlemen who never took
advice.

*(When you can't go forward you must e'en come
back!)*

“How far is St. Helena from the field of
Waterloo?”

A near way — a clear way — the ship will take
you soon.

A pleasant place for gentlemen with little left to
do.

(Morning never tries you till the afternoon!)

“How far from St. Helena to the Gate of
Heaven's Grace?”

That no one knows — that no one knows — and
no one ever will.

But fold your hands across your heart and cover
up your face,

And after all your trapesings, child, lie still

THE CAPTIVE

Not with an outcry to Allah nor any complaining

He answered his name at the muster and stood to the chaining.

When the twin anklets were nipped on the leg-bars that held them,

He brotherly greeted the armourers stooping to weld them.

Ere the sad dust of the marshalled feet of the chain-gang swallowed him

Observing him nobly at ease, I alighted and followed him.

Thus we had speech by the way, but not touching his sorrow —

Rather his red Yesterday and his regal Tomorrow,

Wherein he statelily moved to the clink of his chains unregarded,

Nowise abashed but contented to drink of the potion awarded.

Saluting aloofly his Fate, he made swift with his
story,

And the words of his mouth were as slaves
spreading carpets of glory

Embroidered with names of the Djinns — a
miraculous weaving —

But the cool and perspicuous eye overbore un-
believing.

So I submitted myself to the limits of rapture —
Bound by this man we had bound, amid captives
his capture —

Till he returned me to earth and the visions
departed.

But on him be the Peace and the Blessing; for
he was great-hearted!

THE PUZZLER

The Celt in all his variants from Builth to Bally-
hoo,

His mental processes are plain — one knows
what he will do,

And can logically predicate his finish by his
start;

But the English — ah, the English — they are
quite a race apart.

Their psychology is bovine, their outlook crude
and raw.

They abandon vital matters to be tickled with
a straw,

But the straw that they were tickled with — the
chaff that they were fed with —

They convert into a weaver's beam to break
their foeman's head with.

For undemocratic reasons and for motives not
of State,

They arrive at their conclusions — largely in-
articulate.

Being void of self-expression they confide their
views to none;

But sometimes in a smoking-room, one learns
why things were done.

Yes, sometimes in a smoking-room, through
clouds of "Ers" and "Ums"

Obliquely and by inference illumination comes,
On some step that they have taken, or some
action they approve —

Embellished with the *argot* of the Upper Fourth
Remove.

In telegraphic sentences, half nodded to their
friends,

They hint a matter's inwardness — and there
the matter ends.

And while the Celt is talking from Valencia to
Kirkwall,

The English — ah, the English! — don't say
anything at all!

HADRAMAUTI

Who knows the heart of the Christian? How
does he reason?

What are his measures and balances? Which
is his season

For laughter, forbearance or bloodshed, and
what devils move him

When he arises to smite us? *I do not love him.*

He invites the derision of strangers — he enters
all places.

Booted, bareheaded he enters. With shouts and
embraces

He asks of us news of the household whom we
reckon nameless.

Certainly Allah created him forty-fold shameless.

So it is not in the Desert. One came to me
weeping —

The Avenger of Blood on his track — I took him
in keeping,

Demanding not whom he had slain, I refreshed
him, I fed him
As he were even a brother. But Eblis had bred
him.

He was the son of an ape, ill at ease in his cloth-
ing,
He talked with his head, hands and feet. I
endured him with loathing
Whatever his spirit conceived his countenance
showed it
As a frog shows in a mud-puddle. Yet I abode it!

I fingered my beard and was dumb, in silence
confronting him.

His soul was too shallow for silence, e'en with
Death hunting him.

I said: "'Tis his weariness speaks" but, when he
had rested,

He chirped in my face like some sparrow, and,
presently, jested!

Wherefore slew I that stranger? He brought me
dishonour.

I saddled my mare, Bijli, I set him upon her.

I gave him rice and goat's flesh. He bared me
to laughter.

When he was gone from my tent, swift I followed
after,

Taking my sword in my hand. The hot wine
had filled him.

Under the stars he mocked me — therefore I
killed him!

GALLIO'S SONG

(And Gallio cared for none of these things. — Acts xviii, 17)

All day long to the judgment-seat
The crazed Provincials drew —
All day long at their ruler's feet
Howled for the blood of the Jew.
Insurrection with one accord
Banded itself and woke,
And Paul was about to open his mouth
When Achaia's Deputy spoke —

“Whether the God descend from above
Or the Man ascend upon high,
Whether this maker of tents be Jove
Or a younger deity —
I will be no judge between your gods
And your godless bickerings.
Lictor, drive them hence with rods
I care for none of these things!

Were it a question of lawful due
Or Cæsar's rule denied,

Reason would I should bear with you
And order it well to be tried;
But this is a question of words and names.
I know the strife it brings.
I will not pass upon any your claims.
I care for none of these things.

One thing only I see most clear,
As I pray you also see.
Claudius Cæsar hath set me here
Rome's Deputy to be.
It is Her peace that ye go to break —
Not mine, nor any king's,
But, touching your clamour of "Conscience
sake,"
I care for none of these things.

Whether ye rise for the sake of a creed,
Or riot in hope of spoil,
Equally will I punish the deed,
Equally check the broil;
Nowise permitting injustice at all
From whatever doctrine it springs —
But — whether ye follow Priapus or Paul,
I care for none of these things."

THE BEES AND THE FLIES

A Farmer of the Augustan Age
Perused in Virgil's golden page,
The story of the secret won
From Proteus by Cyrene's son —
How the dank sea-god showed the swain
Means to restore his hives again.
More briefly, how a slaughtered bull
Breeds honey by the bellyful.

The egregious rustic put to death
A bull by stopping of its breath,
Disposed the carcass in a shed
With fragrant herbs and branches spread,
And, having thus performed the charm,
Sat down to wait the promised swarm.

Nor waited long. The God of Day
Impartial, quickening with his ray
Evil and good alike, beheld
The carcass — and the carcass swelled.

Big with new birth the belly heaves
Beneath its screen of scented leaves,
Past any doubt, the bull conceives!

The farmer bids men bring more hives
To house the profit that arrives;
Prepares on pan, and key and kettle,
Sweet music that shall make 'em settle;
But when to crown the work he goes,
Gods! What a stink salutes his nose!
Where are the honest toilers? Where
The gravid mistress of their care?
A busy scene, indeed, he sees,
But not a sign or sound of bees.
Worms of the riper grave unhid
By any kindly coffin lid,
Obscene and shameless to the light
Seethe in insatiate appetite,
Through putrid offal, while above
The hissing blow-fly seeks his love,
Whose offspring, supping where they supt,
Consume corruption twice corrupt.

“OUR FATHERS ALSO”

Thrones, Powers, Dominions, Peoples, Kings,
Are changing 'neath our hand;
Our fathers also see these things
But they do not understand.

By — they are by with mirth and tears,
Wit or the works of Desire —
Cushioned about on the kindly years
Between the wall and the fire.

The grapes are pressed, the corn is shocked —
Standeth no more to glean;
For the Gates of Love and Learning locked
When they went out between.

All lore our Lady Venus bares,
Signalled it was or told
By the dear lips long given to theirs
And longer to the mould.

All Profit, all Device, all Truth
Written it was or said
By the mighty men of their mighty youth,
Which is mighty being dead.

The film that floats before their eyes
The Temple's Veil they call;
And the dust that on the Shewbread lies
Is holy over all.

Warn them of seas that slip our yoke
Of slow-conspiring stars —
The ancient Front of Things unbroke
But heavy with new wars?

By — they are by with mirth and tears,
Wit or the waste of Desire —
Cushioned about on the kindly years
Between the wall and the fire

A BRITISH-ROMAN SONG

(A. D. 406)

My father's father saw it not,
And I, belike, shall never come,
To look on that so-holy spot —
The very Rome —

Crowned by all Time, all Art, all Might
The equal work of Gods and Man,
City beneath whose oldest height —
The Race began!

Soon to send forth again a brood,
Unshakeable, we pray, that clings,
To Rome's thrice-hammered hardihood —
In arduous things.

Strong heart with triple armour bound,
Beat strongly, for thy life-blood runs,
Age after Age, the Empire round —
In us thy Sons

Who, distant from the Seven Hills,
Loving and serving much, require
Thee — *thee* to guard 'gainst home-born ills,
The Imperial Fire!

A PICT SONG

Rome never looks where she treads.

Always her heavy hooves fall,
On our stomachs, our hearts or our heads;
And Romé never heeds when we bawl.
Her sentries pass on — that is all,
And we gather behind them in hordes,
And plot to reconquer the Wall,
With only our tongues for our swords.

We are the Little Folk — we!

Too little to love or to hate.
Leave us alone and you'll see
How we can drag down the State!
We are the worm in the wood!
We are the rot at the root!
We are the germ in the blood!
We are the thorn in the foot!

Mistletoe killing an oak —

Rats gnawing cables in two —
Moths making holes in a cloak —
How they must love what they do!

Yes — and we Little Folk too,
We are busy as they —
Working our works out of view —
Watch, and you'll see it some day!

No indeed! We are not strong,
But we know Peoples that are.
Yes, and we'll guide them along,
To smash and destroy you in War!
We shall be slaves just the same?
Yes, we have always been slaves,
But you — you will die of the shame,
And then we shall dance on your graves!

We are the Little Folk, we, etc.

THE STRANGER

The Stranger within my gate,
He may be true or kind,
But he does not talk my talk —
I cannot feel his mind.
I see the face and the eyes and the mouth,
But not the soul behind.

The men of my own stock
They may do ill or well,
But they tell the lies I am wonted to,
They are used to the lies I tell.
We do not need interpreters
When we go to buy and sell.

The Stranger within my gates,
He may be evil or good,
But I cannot tell what powers control —
What reasons sway his mood;
Nor when the Gods of his far-off land
May repossess his blood.

The men of my own stock,
Bitter bad they may be,
But, at least, they hear the things I hear,
And see the things I see;
And whatever I think of them and their likes
They think of the likes of me.

This was my father's belief
And this is also mine:
Let the corn be all one sheaf —
And the grapes be all one vine,
Ere our children's teeth are set on edge
By bitter bread and wine.

‘RIMINI’

(Marching Song of a Roman Legion of the Later Empire)

When I left Rome for Lalage's sake
By the Legions' road to Rimini,
She vowed her heart was mine to take
With me and my shield to Rimini
(Till the Eagles flew from Rimini)
And I've tramped Britain, and I've tramped Gaul,
And the Pontic shore where the snow flakes fall
As white as the neck of Lalage —
(As cold as the heart of Lalage!)
And I've lost Britain, and I've lost Gaul
And I've lost Rome, and worst of all,
I've lost Lalage!

When you go by the Via Aurelia,
As thousands have travelled before,
Remember the Luck of the Soldier
Who never saw Rome any more!
Oh dear was the sweetheart that kissed him
And dear was the mother that bore,

But his shield was picked up in the heather,
And he never saw Rome any more!

And *he* left Rome, etc.

When you go by the Via Aurelia
That runs from the City to Gaul,
Remember the Luck of the Soldier
Who rose to be master of all!
He carried the sword and the buckler
He mounted his guard on the Wall,
Till the Legions elected him Cæsar,
And he rose to be master of all!

And *he* left Rome, etc.

It's twenty-five marches to Narbo,
It's forty-five more up the Rhone,
And the end may be death in the heather
Or life on an Emperor's throne;
But whether the Eagles obey us,
Or we go to the Ravens — alone,
I'd sooner be Lalage's lover
Than sit on an Emperor's throne!

We've *all* left Rome for Lalage's sake, etc.

‘POOR HONEST MEN’

(A. D. 1800)

Your jar of Virginny
Will cost you a guinea
Which you reckon too much by five shillings or
ten;
But light your churchwarden
And judge it according,
When I’ve told you the troubles of poor honest
men.

From the Capes of the Delaware,
As you are well aware,
We sail with tobacco for England — but then,
Our own British cruisers,
They watch us come through, sirs,
And they press half a score of us poor honest
men!

Or if by quick sailing
(Thick weather prevailing)
We leave them behind (as we do now and then)

We are sure of a gun from
Each frigate we run from,
Which is often destruction to poor honest men!

Broadsides the Atlantic
We tumble short-handed,
With shot-holes to plug and new canvas to bend,
And off the Azores,
Dutch, Dons and Monsieurs
Are waiting to terrify poor honest men.

Napoleon's embargo
Is laid on all cargo
Which comfort or aid to King George may in-
tend,
And since roll, twist and leaf,
Of all comforts is chief,
They try for to steal it from poor honest men!

With no heart for fight,
We take refuge in flight
But fire as we run, our retreat to defend,
Until our stern-chasers
Cut up her fore-braces,
And she flies up the wind from us poor honest men!

Twix' the Forties and Fifties,
South-eastward the drift is,
And so, when we think we are making Land's End,
Alas, it is Ushant
With half the King's Navy,
Blockading French ports against poor honest
men!

But they may not quit station
(Which is our salvation)
So swiftly we stand to the Nor'ard again;
And finding the tail of
A homeward bound convoy,
We slip past the Scillies like poor honest men.

Twix' the Lizard and Dover,
We hand our stuff over,
Though I may not inform how we do it, nor
when.

But a light on each quarter
Low down on the water
Is well understood by poor honest men!

Even then we have dangers,
From meddlesome strangers,

Who spy on our business and are not content
To take a smooth answer,
Except with a handspike . . .
And they say they are murdered by poor honest
men!

To be drowned or be shot
Is our natural lot,
Why should we, moreover, be hanged in the
end —
After all our great pains
For to dangle in chains
As though we were smugglers, not poor honest
men?

“WHEN THE GREAT ARK”

When the Great Ark, in Vigo Bay,
Rode stately through the half-manned fleet,
From every ship about her way
She heard the mariners entreat —
“Before we take the seas again
Let down your boats and send us men!

“We have no lack of victual here
With work — God knows! — enough for all,
To hand and reef and watch and steer,
Because our present strength is small.
While your three decks are crowded so
Your crews can scarcely stand or go.

“In war, your numbers do but raise
Confusion and divided will;
In storm, the mindless deep obeys
Not multitudes but single skill;
In calm, your numbers, closely pressed,
Must breed a mutiny or pest.

“We, even on unchallenged seas,
Dare not adventure where we would,
But forfeit brave advantages
For lack of men to make 'em good;
Whereby, to England's double cost,
Honour and profit both are lost!”

PROPHETS AT HOME

Prophets have honour all over the Earth,
Except in the village where they were born;
Where such as knew them boys from birth,
Nature-ally hold 'em in scorn.

When Prophets are naughty and young and vain,
They make a won'erful grievance of it.

(You can see by their writings how they com-
plain),

But O, 'tis won'erful good for the Prophet!

There's nothing Nineveh Town can give
(Nor being swallowed by whales between),
Makes up for the place where a man's folk live,
Which don't care nothing what he has been.
He might ha' been that, or he might ha' been
this,

But they love and they hate him for what he is.

JUBAL AND TUBAL CAIN

Jubal sang of the Wrath of God

And the curse of thistle and thorn —

But Tubal got him a pointed rod,

And scrabbled the earth for corn.

Old — old as that early mould,

Young as the sprouting grain —

Yearly green is the strife between

Jubal and Tubal Cain!

Jubal sang of the new-found sea,

And the love that its waves divide —

But Tubal hollowed a fallen tree

And passed to the further side.

Black — black as the hurricane-wrack,

Salt as the under-main —

Bitter and cold is the hate they hold —

Jubal and Tubal Cain!

Jubal sang of the golden years

When wars and wounds shall cease —

But Tubal fashioned the hand-flung spears

And showèd his neighbours peace.

New — new as the Nine point Two,
Older than Lamech's slain —
Roaring and loud is the feud avowed
Twix' Jubal and Tubal Cain!

Jubal sang of the cliffs that bar
And the peaks that none may crown —
But Tubal clambered by jut and scar
And there he builded a town.
High — high as the snowsheds lie,
Low as the culverts drain —
Wherever they be they can never agree —
Jubal and Tubal Cain!

THE VOORTREKKER

The gull shall whistle in his wake, the blind wave
break in fire.

He shall fulfil God's utmost will, unknowing his
desire.

And he shall see old planets change and alien
stars arise,

And give the gale his seaworn sail in shadow of
new skies,

Strong lust of gear shall drive him forth and
hunger arm his hand,

To win his food from the desert rude, his pit-
tance from the sand.

His neighbours' smoke shall vex his eyes, their
voices break his rest.

He shall go forth till south is north sullen and
dispossessed.

He shall desire loneliness and his desire shall
bring,

Hard on his heels, a thousand wheels, a People
and a King.

He shall come back on his own track, and by his
scarce-cooled camp

There shall he meet the roaring street, the der-
rick and the stamp:

There he shall blaze a nation's ways with
hatchet and with brand,

Till on his last-won wilderness an Empire's out-
posts stand.

A SCHOOL SONG

“Let us now praise famous men” —

*Men of little showing —
For their work continueth,
And their work continueth,
Broad and deep continueth,
Greater than their knowing!*

Western wind and open surge
Took us from our mothers,
Flung us on a naked shore
(Twelve bleak houses by the shore!
Seven summers by the shore!)
’Mid two hundred brothers.

There we met with famous men
Set in office o’er us;
And they beat on us with rods —
Faithfully with many rods —
Daily beat us on with rods,
For the love they bore us!

Out of Egypt unto Troy —
Over Himalaya —
Far and sure our bands have gone —
Hy-Brasil or Babylon,
Islands of the Southern Run,
And Cities of Cathaia!

And we all praise famous men —
Ancients of the College;
For they taught us common sense —
Tried to teach us common sense —
Truth and God's Own Common Sense,
Which is more than knowledge!

Each degree of Latitude
Strung about Creation
Seeth one or more of us
(Of one muster each of us),
Diligent in that he does,
Keen in his vocation.

This we learned from famous men,
Knowing not its uses,
When they showed, in daily work,

Man must finish off his work —
Right or wrong, his daily work —
And without excuses.

Servants of the Staff and chain,
Mine and fuse and grapnel —
Some before the face of Kings,
Stand before the face of Kings;
Bearing gifts to divers Kings —
Gifts of case and shrapnel.

This we learned from famous men
Teaching in our borders,
Who declarèd it was best,
Safest, easiest, and best —
Expeditious, wise, and best —
To obey your orders.

Some beneath the further stars
Bear the greater burden:
Set to serve the lands they rule,
(Save he serve no man may rule),
Serve and love the lands they rule;
Seeking praise nor guerdon.

This we learned from famous men,
Knowing not we learned it.
Only, as the years went by —
Lonely, as the years went by —
Far from help as years went by,
Plainer we discerned it.

Wherefore praise we famous men
From whose bays we borrow —
They that put aside To-day —
All the joys of their To-day —
And with toil of their To-day
Bought for us To-morrow!

*Bless and praise we famous men —
Men of little showing —
For their work continueth,
And their work continueth,
Broad and deep continueth,
Great beyond their knowing!*

“A SERVANT WHEN HE REIGNETH”

(For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear. For a servant when he reigneth and a fool when he is filled with meat; for an odious woman when she is married, and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress. — Prov. xxx. 21-22-23.)

Three things make earth unquiet
And four she cannot brook
The godly Agur counted them
And put them in a book —
Those Four Tremendous Curses
With which mankind is cursed
But a Servant when he Reigneth
Old Agur counted first.

An Handmaid that is Mistress
We need not call upon,
A Fool when he is full of Meat
Will fall asleep anon.
An Odious Woman Married
May bear a babe and mend,
But a Servant when He Reigneth
Is Confusion to the end.

His feet are swift to tumult,
His hands are slow to toil,
His ears are deaf to reason,
His lips are loud in broil.
He knows no use for power
Except to show his might,
He gives no heed to judgment
Unless it prove him right.

Because he served a master
Before his Kingship came,
And hid in all disaster
Behind his master's name.
So, when his Folly opens
The unnecessary hells,
A Servant when He Reigneth
Throws the blame on some one else.

His vows are lightly spoken,
His faith is hard to bind,
His trust is easy broken,
He fears his fellow-kind.
The nearest mob will move him
To break the pledge he gave —
Oh a Servant when He Reigneth
Is more than ever slave!

‘OUR FATHERS OF OLD’

Excellent herbs had our fathers of old —

Excellent herbs to ease their pain —

Alexanders and Marigold,

Eyebright, Orris, and Elecampane.

Basil, Rocket, Valerian, Rue,

(Almost singing themselves they run)

Vervain, Dittany, Call-me-to-you —

Cowslip, Melilot, Rose of the Sun.

Anything green that grew out of the mould

Was an excellent herb to our fathers of old.

Wonderful tales had our fathers of old

Wonderful tales of the herbs and the stars —

The Sun was Lord of the Marigold,

Basil and Rocket belonged to Mars.

Pat as a sum in division it goes —

(Every plant had a star bespoke) —

Who but Venus should govern the Rose?

Who but Jupiter own the Oak?

Simply and gravely the facts are told

In the wonderful books of our fathers of old.

Wonderful little, when all is said,
Wonderful little our fathers knew.
Half their remedies cured you dead —
Most of their teaching was quite untrue
“Look at the stars when a patient is ill,
(Dirt has nothing to do with disease,)
Bleed and blister as much as you will,
Blister and bleed him as oft as you please.”
Whence enormous and manifold
Errors were made by our fathers of old.

Yet when the sickness was sore in the land,
And neither planets nor herbs assuaged,
They took their lives in their lancet-hand
And, oh, what a wonderful war they waged!
Yes, when the crosses were chalked on the door—
Yes, when the terrible dead-cart rolled,
Excellent courage our fathers bore —
Excellent heart had our fathers of old,
None too learned, but nobly bold
Into the fight went our fathers of old.

If it be certain, as Galen says,
And sage Hippocrates holds as much —
“That those afflicted by doubts and dismays
Are mightily helped by a dead man’s touch,”

Then, be good to us, stars above!

Then, be good to us, herbs below!

We are afflicted by what we can prove,

We are distracted by what we know.

So — ah, so!

Down from your heaven or up from your
mould,

Send us the hearts of our fathers of old!

THE HERITAGE

Our Fathers in a wondrous age,
Ere yet the Earth was small,
Ensured to us an heritage,
And doubted not at all
That we, the children of their heart,
Which then did beat so high,
In later time should play like part
For our posterity.

A thousand years they steadfast built,
To 'vantage us and ours,
The Walls that were a world's despair,
The sea-constraining Towers:
Yet in their midmost pride they knew,
And unto Kings made known,
Not all from these their strength they drew,
Their faith from brass or stone.

Youth's passion, manhood's fierce intent,
With age's judgment wise,

They spent, and counted not they spent,
At daily sacrifice.

Not lambs alone nor purchased doves
Or tithe of trader's gold —
Their lives most dear, their dearer loves,
They offered up of old.

Refraining e'en from lawful things,
They bowed the neck to bear
The unadornèd yoke that brings
Stark toil and sternest care.
Wherefore through them is Freedom sure;
Wherefore through them we stand
From all but sloth and pride secure,
In a delightful land.

Then, fretful, murmur not they gave
So great a charge to keep,
Nor dream that awestruck Time shall save
Their labour while we sleep.
Dear-bought and clear, a thousand year,
Our fathers' title runs.
Make we likewise their sacrifice,
Defrauding not our sons.

SONG OF THE FIFTH RIVER

When first by Eden Tree,
The Four Great Rivers ran,
To each was appointed a Man
Her Prince and Ruler to be

But after this was ordained,
(The ancient legends tell),
There came dark Israel,
For whom no River remained.

Then He Whom the Rivers obey
Said to him: "Fling on the ground
A handful of yellow clay,
And a Fifth Great River shall run,
Mightier than these Four,
In secret the Earth around;
And Her secret evermore,
Shall be shown to thee and thy Race."

So it was said and done.
And, deep in the veins of Earth,
And, fed by a thousand springs

That comfort the market-place,
Or sap the power of Kings,
The Fifth Great River had birth,
Even as it was foretold —
The Secret River of Gold!

And Israel laid down
His sceptre and his crown,
To brood on that River bank,
Where the waters flashed and sank,
And burrowed in earth and fell,
And bided a season below,
For reason that none might know,
Save only Israel.

He is Lord of the Last —
The Fifth, most wonderful, Flood.
He hears Her thunder past
And Her Song is in his blood.
He can foresay: "She will fall,"
For he knows which fountain dries
Behind which desert-belt
A thousand leagues to the South.

He can foresay: "She will rise."
He knows what far snows melt;

Along what mountain-wâll
A thousand leagues to the North.
He snuffs the coming drouth
As he snuffs the coming rain,
He knows what each will bring forth,
And turns it to his gain.

A Ruler without a Throne,
A Prince without a Sword,
Israel follows his quest.
In every land a guest,
Of many lands a lord,
In no land King is he.
But the Fifth Great River keeps
The secret of Her deeps
For Israel alone,
As it was ordered to be.

CHAPTER HEADINGS

THE NAULAHKA

We meet in an evil land
That is near to the gates of hell.
I wait for thy command
To serve, to speed or withstand.
And thou sayest, I do not well?

Oh Love, the flowers so red
Are only tongues of flame
The earth is full of the dead,
The new-killed, restless dead.
There is danger beneath and o'erhead
And I guard thy gates in fear
Of peril and jeopardy
Of words thou canst not hear
Of signs thou canst not see
And thou sayest 'tis ill that I come?

This I saw when the rites were done
And the lamps were dead and the Gods alone,

And the grey snake coiled on the altar stone.
Ere I fled from a Fear that I could not see
And the Gods of the East made mouths at me.

Now it is not good for the Christian's health to
hustle the Aryan brown,
For the Christian riles and the Aryan smiles and
he weareth the Aryan down;
And the end of the fight is a tombstone white
with the name of the late deceased,
And the epitaph drear; — "A fool lies here who
tried to hustle the East."

Beat off in our last fight were we?
The greater need to seek the sea.
For Fortune changeth as the moon
To caravel and picaroon.
Then Eastward Ho! Or Westward Ho!
Whichever wind may meetest blow
Our quarry sails on either sea
Fat prey for such bold lads as we
And every sun-dried buccaneer
Must hand and reef and watch and steer,
And bear great wrath of sea and sky

Before the plate-ships wallow by.
Now as our tall bows take the foam
Let no man turn his heart to home
Save to desire treasure more
And larger warehouse for his store
When treasure trove from Santos Bay
Shall make our sea-washed village gay.

Because I sought it far from men
In deserts and alone
I found it burning overhead
The jewel of a Throne.

Because I sought — I sought it so
And spent my days to find
It blazed one moment ere it left
The blacker night behind.

When a lover hies abroad
Looking for his love,
Azrael smiling sheathes his sword,
Heaven smiles above.
Earth and sea

His servants be
And to lesser compass round
That his love be sooner found.

There was a strife 'twixt man and maid
Oh that was at the birth of time!
But what befell 'twixt man and maid
Oh that's beyond the grip of rhyme.
'Twas, "Sweet I must not bide with you"
And "Love I cannot bide alone;"
For both were young and both were true
And both were hard as the nether stone.

There is pleasure in the wet wet clay,
When the artist's hand is potting it.
There is pleasure in the wet wet lay,
When the poet's pad is blotting it.
There is pleasure in the shine of your picture on
the line
At the Royal Acade-my,
But the pleasure felt in these, is as chalk to
Cheddar cheese
When it comes to a well-made Lie.
To a quite unwreckable Lie

To a most impeccable Lie!
To a water-tight, fireproof, angle-iron, sunk-
hinge, time-lock, steel-faced Lie!
Not a private hansom Lie
But a pair-and-brougham Lie
Not a little place at Tooting, but a country-house
with shooting
And a ring-fence, deer-park Lie.

THE LIGHT THAT FAILED

So we settled it all when the storm was done
As comfy as comfy could be
And I was to wait in the barn, my dears,
Because I was only three.
And Teddy would run to the rainbow's foot
Because he was five and a man;
And that's how it all began, my dears,
And that's how it all began.

“If I have taken the common clay
And wrought it cunningly.

In the shape of a God that was digged a
clod

The greater honour to me”

“If thou hast taken the common clay
And thy hands be not free,

From the taint of the soil thou hast made
thy spoil

The greater shame to thee”

The wolf-cub at even lay hid in the corn
Where the smoke of the cooking hung grey
He knew where the doe made a couch for her
fawn,

And he looked to his strength for his prey.

But the moon swept the smoke-wreaths away
And he turned from his meal in the villager’s
close

And he bayed to the moon as she rose.

The lark will make her hymn to God

The partridge call her brood

While I forget the heath I trod

The fields wherein I stood.
'Tis dule to know not night from morn
But greater dule to know,
I can but hear the hunter's horn
That once I used to blow.

There were three friends that buried the fourth
The mould in his mouth and the dust in his eyes,
And they went south and east and north —
The strong man fights but the sick man dies.
There were three friends that spoke of the
dead —
The strong man fights but the sick man dies —
“And would he were here with us now” they
said
The sun in our face and the wind in our eyes.

Yet at the last, ere our spearmen had found him
Yet at the last ere a sword-thrust could save
Yet at the last, with his masters around him
He spoke of the Faith as a master to slave.
Yet at the last, though the Kafirs had maimed
him,

Broken by bondage and wrecked by the reiver,
Yet at the last, tho' the darkness had claimed
 him
He called upon Allah, and died a Believer!

THE CHILDREN'S SONG

Land of our Birth, we pledge to thee
Our love and toil in the years to be;
When we are grown and take our place,
As men and women with our race.

Father in Heaven who lovest all.
Oh help Thy children when they call;
That they may build from age to age,
An undefilèd heritage.

Teach us to bear the yoke in youth,
With steadfastness and careful truth;
That, in our time, Thy Grace may give
The Truth whereby the Nations live.

Teach us to rule ourselves alway,
Controlled and cleanly night and day;
That we may bring, if need arise,
No maimed or worthless sacrifice.

Teach us to look in all our ends,
On Thee for judge, and not our friends;

That we, with Thee, may walk uncowed
By fear or favour of the crowd.

Teach us the Strength that cannot seek,
By deed or thought, to hurt the weak;
That, under Thee, we may possess
Man's strength to comfort man's distress.

Teach us Delight in simple things,
And Mirth that has no bitter springs;
Forgiveness free of evil done,
And Love to all men 'neath the sun!

Land of our Birth, our faith, our pride,
For whose dear sake our fathers died;
O Motherland, we pledge to thee,
Head, heart, and hand through the years to be!

IF

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream — and not make dreams your
master;

If you can think — and not make thoughts
your aim,

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out
tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold
on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your
virtue,
Or walk with Kings — nor lose the common
touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And — which is more — you'll be a Man, my
son!

THE PRODIGAL SON

(Western Version)

Here come I to my own again,
Fed, forgiven and known again,
Claimed by bone of my bone again
And cheered by flesh of my flesh.
The fatted calf is dressed for me,
But the husks have greater zest for me,
I think my pigs will be best for me,
So I'm off to the Yards afresh.

I never was very refined, you see,
(And it weighs on my brother's mind, you see)
But there's no reproach among swine, d'you see,
For being a bit of a swine.
So I'm off with wallet and staff to eat
The bread that is three parts chaff to wheat,
But glory be! — there's a laugh to it,
Which isn't the case when we dine.

My father glooms and advises me,
My brother sulks and despises me,

And Mother catechises me
Till I want to go out and swear.
And, in spite of the butler's gravity,
I know that the servants have it I
Am a monster of moral depravity,
And I'm damned if I think it's fair!

I wasted my substance, I know I did,
On riotous living, so I did,
But there's nothing on record to show I did
Worse than my betters have done.
They talk of the money I spent out there —
They hint at the pace that I went out there —
But they all forget I was sent out there
Alone as a rich man's son.

So I was a mark for plunder at once,
And lost my cash (can you wonder?) at once,
But I didn't give up and knock under at once,
I worked in the Yards, for a spell,
Where I spent my nights and my days with hogs.
And shared their milk and maize with hogs,
Till, I guess, I have learned what pays with hogs
And — I have that knowledge to sell!

So back I go to my job again,
Not so easy to rob again,
Or quite so ready to sob again
On any neck that's around.
I'm leaving, Pater. Good-bye to you!
God bless you, Mater! I'll write to you. . . .
I wouldn't be impolite to you,
But, Brother, you *are* a hound!

THE NECESSITARIAN

I know not in Whose hands are laid
To empty upon earth
From unsuspected ambushade
The very Urns of Mirth;

Who bids the Heavenly Lark arise
And cheer our solemn round —
The Jest beheld with streaming eyes
And grovellings on the ground;

Who joins the flats of Time and Chance
Behind the prey preferred,
And thrones on Shrieking Circumstance
The Sacredly Absurd,

Till Laughter, voiceless through excess,
Waves mute appeal and sore,
Above the midriff's deep distress,
For breath to laugh once more.

No creed hath dared to hail Him Lord,
No raptured choirs proclaim,

And Nature's strenuous Overword
Hath nowhere breathed His Name.

Yet, it must be, on wayside jape,
The selfsame Power bestows
The selfsame power as went to shape
His Planet or His Rose.

THE JESTER

There are three degrees of bliss
At the foot of Allah's Throne
And the highest place is his
Who saves a brother's soul
At peril of his own;
There is the Power made known!

There are three degrees of bliss
In the Gardens of Paradise,
And the second place is his
Who saves his brother's soul
By excellent advice.
For there the Glory lies!

There are three degrees of bliss
And three abodes of the Blest,
And the lowest place is his
Who has saved a soul by a jest
And a brother's soul in sport . . .
But there do the Angels resort!

A SONG OF TRAVEL

Where's the lamp that Hero lit
Once to call Leander home?
Equal Time hath shovelled it
'Neath the wrack of Greece and Rome.
Neither wait we any more
That worn sail which Argo bore.

Dust and dust of ashes close
All the Vestal Virgins' care;
And the oldest altar shows
But an older darkness there.
Age-encamped Oblivion
Tenteth every light that shone!

Yet shall we, for Suns that die,
Wall our wanderings from desire?
Or, because the Moon is high
Scorn to use a nearer fire?
Lest some envious Pharaoh stir,
Make our lives our sepulchre?

Nay! Though Time with petty Fate
Prison us and Emperors,
By our Arts do we create
That which Time himself devours —
Such machines as well may run
'Gainst the horses of the Sun.

When we would a new abode,
Space, our tyrant King no more
Lays the long lance of the road
At our feet and flees before,
Breathless, ere we overwhelm,
To submit a further realm!

THE TWO-SIDED MAN

Much I owe to the Land that grew —
More to the Life that fed —
But most to Allah Who gave me two
Separate sides to my head.

Much I reflect on the Good and the True
In the Faiths beneath the sun,
But most upon Allah who gave me two
Sides to my head, not one.

Wesley's following, Calvin's flock,
White or yellow or bronze,
Shaman, Ju-ju or Angekok
Minister, Mukamuk, Bonze —

Here is a health, my brothers, to you
However your prayers are said,
And praised be Allah Who gave me two
Separate sides to my head!

I would go without shirt or shoe,
Friend, tobacco or bread,
Sooner than lose for a minute the two
Separate sides of my head!

AN ASTROLOGER'S SONG

To the Heavens above us
O look and behold
The Planets that love us
All harnessed in gold!
What chariots, what horses
Against us shall bide
While the Stars in their courses
Do fight on our side?

All thought, all desires,
That are under the sun,
Are one with their fires,
As we also are one.
All matter, all spirit,
All fashion, all frame,
Receive and inherit
Their strength from the same.

Oh, man that deniest
All power save thine own

Their power in the highest
Is mightily shown.
Not less in the lowest
That power is made clear.
(Oh, man, if thou knowest,
What treasure is here!)

Earth quakes in her throes
And we wonder for why.
But the blind planet knows
When her ruler is nigh;
And, attuned since Creation
To perfect accord,
She thrills in her station
And yearns to her Lord.

The waters have risen,
The springs are unbound —
The floods break their prison,
And ravin around.
No rampart withstands 'em,
Their fury will last,
Till the Sign that commands 'em
Sinks low or swings past.

Through abysses unproven,
And gulfs beyond thought,
Our portion is woven
Our burden is brought.
Yet They that prepare it,
Whose Nature we share,
Make us who must bear it
Well able to bear.

Though terrors o’ertake us
We’ll not be afraid.
No Power can unmake us
Save that which has made.
Nor yet beyond reason
Or hope shall we fall —
All things have their season,
And Mercy crowns all!

Then, doubt not, ye fearful —
The Eternal is King —
Up, heart, and be cheerful,
And lustily sing: —
What chariots, what horses,
Against us shall bide
While the Stars in their courses
Do fight on our side?

“THE POWER OF THE DOG”

There is sorrow enough in the natural way
From men and women to fill our day;
But when we are certain of sorrow in store,
Why do we always arrange for more?
*Brothers and Sisters, I bid you beware
Of giving your heart to a dog to tear.*

Buy a pup and your money will buy
Love unflinching that cannot lie —
Perfect passion and worship fed
By a kick in the ribs or a pat on the head.
*Nevertheless it is hardly fair
To risk your heart for a dog to tear.*

When the fourteen years which Nature permits
Are closing in asthma, or tumour, or fits,
And the vet's unspoken prescription runs
To lethal chambers or loaded guns,
*Then you will find — it's your own affair,
But . . . you've given your heart to a dog to tear.*

When the body that lived at your single will,
When the whimper of welcome is stilled (how
still!)

When the spirit that answered your every mood
Is gone — wherever it goes — for good,
*You will discover how much you care,
And will give your heart to a dog to tear.*

We've sorrow enough in the natural way,
When it comes to burying Christian clay.
Our loves are not given, but only lent,
At compound interest of cent per cent.
Though it is not always the case, I believe,
That the longer we've kept 'em, the more do we
grieve:

For, when debts are payable, right or wrong,
A short-time loan is as bad as a long —
*So why in — Heaven (before we are there)
Should we give our hearts to a dog to tear?*

THE RABBI'S SONG

If Thought can reach to Heaven,
On Heaven let it dwell,
For fear thy Thought be given
Like power to reach to Hell.
For fear the desolation
And darkness of thy mind
Perplex an habitation
Which thou hast left behind.

Let nothing linger after —
No whimpering ghost remain,
In wall, or beam, or rafter,
Of any hate or pain.
Cleanse and call home thy spirit,
Deny her leave to cast,
On aught thy heirs inherit,
The shadow of her past.

For think, in all thy sadness,
What road our griefs may take;

Whose brain reflect our madness,
Or whom our terrors shake.
For think, lest any languish
By cause of thy distress —
The arrows of our anguish
Fly farther than we guess.

Our lives, our tears, as water,
Are spilled upon the ground;
God giveth no man quarter,
Yet God a means hath found,
Though faith and hope have vanished,
And even love grows dim —
A means whereby His banished
Be not expelled from Him.

THE BEE BOY'S SONG

Bees! Bees! Hark to your bees!

*“Hide from your neighbours as much as you
please,*

*But all that has happened, to us you must tell,
Or else we will give you no honey to sell!”*

A maiden in her glory,

Upon her wedding-day,

Must tell her Bees the story,

Or else they'll fly away.

Fly away — die away —

Dwindle down and leave you!

But if you don't deceive your Bees,

Your Bees will not deceive you.

Marriage, birth or buryin',

News across the seas,

All you're sad or merry in,

You must tell the Bees.

Tell 'em coming in an' out,
Where the Fanners fan,
'Cause the Bees are just about
As curious as a man!

Don't you wait where trees are,
When the lightnings play,
Nor don't you hate where Bees are,
Or else they'll pine away.
Pine away — dwine away —
Anything to leave you!
But if you never grieve your Bees,
Your Bees'll never grieve you.

THE RETURN OF THE CHILDREN

Neither the harps nor the crowns amused, nor
the cherubs' dove-winged races —
Holding hands forlornly the Children wandered
beneath the Dome,
Plucking the splendid robes of the passers by,
and with pitiful faces
Begging what Princes and Powers refused: —
“Ah, please will you let us go home?”

Over the jewelled floor, nigh weeping, ran to
them Mary the Mother,
Kneeled and caressed and made promise with kisses,
and drew them along to the gateway—
Yea, the all-iron unbribeable Door which Peter
must guard and none other.
Straightway She took the Keys from his keeping,
and opened and freed them straightway.

Then, to Her Son, Who had seen and smiled, She
said: “On the night that I bore Thee,

What didst Thou care for a love beyond mine or
a heaven that was not my arm?

Didst Thou push from the nipple, O Child, to
hear the angels adore Thee?

When we two lay in the breath of the kine?"

And He said: — "Thou hast done no harm."

So through the Void the Children ran homeward
merrily hand in hand,

Looking neither to left nor right where the
breathless Heavens stood still.

And the Guards of the Void resheathed their
swords, for they heard the Command:

"Shall I that have suffered the children to come
to Me hold them against their will?"

OLD MOTHER LAIDINWOOL

“Old Mother Laidinwool had nigh twelve months
been dead.

She heard the hops was doing well an’ so popped
up her head,”

For she said; — “The lads I’ve hopped with
when I was young and fair,

They’re bound to be at hopping and I’m bound
to meet ’em there!”

Let me up and go

Back to the work I know, Lord!

Back to the work I know Lord!

For it’s dark where I lie down My Lord!

An’ it’s dark where I lie down!

Old Mother Laidinwool, she give her bones a
shake,

An’ trotted down the churchyard path as fast as
she could make.

She met the Parson walking, but she says to
him, says she; —

“Oh don’t let no one trouble for a poor old ghost
like me!”

’Twas all a warm September an’ the hops had
flourished grand,

She saw the folks get into ’em with stockin’s
on their hands;

An’ none of ’em was foreigners but all which she
had known,

And old Mother Laidinwool she blessed ’em
every one.

She saw her daughters picking an’ their childern
them beside,

An’ she moved among the babies an’ she stilled
’em when they cried.

She saw their clothes was bought not begged, an’
they was clean an’ fat,

An’ Old Mother Laidinwool she thanked the
Lord for that.

Old Mother Laidinwool she waited on all day
Until it come too dark to see an' people went
away —

Until it come too dark to see an' lights began
to show,

An' old Mother Laidinwool she hadn't where to
go.

Old Mother Laidinwool she give her bones a
shake,

An' trotted back to churchyard-mould as fast as
she could make.

She went where she was bidden to an' there laid
down her ghost, . . .

An' the Lord have mercy on you in the Day you
need it most!

Let me in again,

Out of the wet an' rain, Lord!

Out of the dark an' rain, Lord!

For it's best as you shall say, My Lord!

An' it 's best as you shall say!"

THE LOOKING-GLASS

(A Country Dance)

Queen Bess was Harry's daughter. Stand forward partners all!

In ruff and stomacher and gown

She danced King Philip down-a down,

And left her shoe to show 'twas true —

(The very tune I'm playing you)

In Norgem at Brickwall!

The Queen was in her chamber, and she was
middling old,

Her petticoat was satin, and her stomacher was
gold.

Backwards and forwards and sideways did she
pass,

Making up her mind to face the cruel looking-
glass.

The cruel looking-glass that will never show a
lass

As comely or as kindly or as young as what she
was!

*Queen Bess was Harry's daughter. Now hand
your partners all!*

The Queen was in her chamber, a-combing of
her hair.

There came Queen Mary's spirit and It stood
behind her chair,

Singing "Backwards and forwards and sideways
may you pass,

But I will stand behind you till you face the
looking-glass.

The cruel looking-glass that will never show a
lass

As lovely or unlucky or as lonely as I was!"

*Queen Bess was Harry's daughter. Now turn
your partners all!*

The Queen was in her chamber, a-weeping very
sore,

There came Lord Leicester's spirit and It
scratched upon the door,

Singing "Backwards and forwards and sideways
may you pass,

But I will walk beside you till you face the
looking-glass.

The cruel looking-glass that will never show a
lass,

As hard and unforgiving or as wicked as you
was!"

*Queen Bess was Harry's daughter. Now kiss
your partners all!*

The Queen was in her chamber, her sins were on
her head.

She looked the spirits up and down and stately
she said: —

"Backwards and forwards and sideways though
I've been,

Yet I am Harry's daughter and I am England's
Queen!"

And she faced the looking-glass (and whatever
else there was)

And she saw her day was over and she saw her
beauty pass

In the cruel looking-glass, that can always hurt
a lass

More hard than any ghost there is or any man
there was!

THE QUEEN'S MEN

Valour and Innocence
Have latterly gone hence
To certain death by certain shame attended.
Envy — ah! even to tears! —
The fortune of their years
Which, though so few, yet so divinely ended.

Scarce had they lifted up
Life's full and fiery cup,
Than they had set it down untouched before
 them.

Before their day arose
They beckoned it to close —
Close in confusion and destruction o'er them.

They did not stay to ask
What prize should crown their task,
Well sure that prize was such as no man strives
 for;

But passed into eclipse
Her kiss upon their lips —
Even Belphebe's, whom they gave their lives
for!

THE CITY OF SLEEP

Over the edge of the purple down,
Where the single lamplight gleams,
Know ye the road to the Merciful Town
That is hard by the Sea of Dreams —
Where the poor may lay their wrongs away,
And the sick may forget to weep?
But we — pity us! Oh, pity us!
We wakeful; ah, pity us! —
We must go back with Policeman Day —
Back from the City of Sleep!

Weary they turn from the scroll and crown,
Fetter and prayer and plough —
They that go up to the Merciful Town,
For her gates are closing now.
It is their right in the Baths of Night
Body and soul to steep,
But we — pity us! ah, pity us!
We wakeful; oh, pity us! —
We must go back with Policeman Day —
Back from the City of Sleep!

Over the edge of the purple down,
 Ere the tender dreams begin,
Look — we may look — at the Merciful Town,
 But we may not enter in!
Outcasts all, from her guarded wall
 Back to our watch we creep:
We — pity us! ah, pity us!
 We wakeful; oh, pity us! —
We that go back with Policeman Day —
 Back from the City of Sleep!

THE WIDOWER

For a season there must be pain —
For a little, little space
I shall lose the sight of her face,
Take back the old life again
While She is at rest in her place.

For a season this pain must endure,
For a little, little while
I shall sigh more often than smile
Till Time shall work me a cure,
And the pitiful days beguile.

For that season we must be apart,
For a little length of years,
Till my life's last hour nears,
And, above the beat of my heart,
I hear Her voice in my ears.

But I shall not understand —
Being set on some later love,

Shall not know her for whom I strove,
Till she reach me forth her hand
Saying "Who but I have the right?"
And out of a troubled night
Shall draw me safe to the land.

THE PRAYER OF MIRIAM COHEN

From the wheel and the drift of Things
Deliver us, Good Lord,
And we will face the wrath of Kings
The faggot and the sword!

Lay not Thy Works before our eyes
Nor vex us with Thy Wars
Lest we should feel the straining skies
O'ertrod by trampling stars.

Hold us secure behind the gates
Of saving flesh and bone,
Lest we should dream what dream awaits
The soul escaped alone.

Thy Path, Thy Purposes conceal
From our beleaguered realm,
Lest any shattering whisper steal
Upon us and o'erwhelm.

A veil twixt us and Thee, Good Lord,
A veil twixt us and Thee,
Lest we should hear too clear, too clear,
And unto madness see!

GOW'S WATCH

ACT II. SCENE 2.

The pavilion in the Gardens. Enter Ferdinand and the King

Ferdinand. Your tiercel's too long at hack, Sir.

He's no eyass

But a passage-hawk that footed ere we caught him,

Dangerously free o' the air. Faith were he mine
(As mine's the glove he binds to for his tirings)
I'd fly him with a make-hawk. He's in yarak
Plumed to the very point. So manned so
weathered!

Give him the firmament God made him for
And what shall take the air of him?

The King. A young wing yet
Bold — overbold on the perch but, think you,
Ferdinand,
He can endure the tall skies yonder? Cozen

Advantage out of the teeth of the hurricane?
Choose his own mate against the lammer-geier?
Ride out a night-long tempest, hold his pitch
Between the lightning and the cloud it leaps
from,
Never too pressed to kill?

Ferdinand. I'll answer for him.

Bating all parable, I know the Prince.
There's a bleak devil in the young, my Lord,
God put it there to save 'em from their elders
And break their father's heart, but bear them
scatheless

Through mire and thorns and blood if need be.
Think

What our prime saw! Such glory, such achieve-
ments

As now our children wondering at, examine
Themselves to see if they shall hardly equal.
But what cared we while we wrought the won-
ders? Nothing!
The rampant deed contented

The King. Little enough, God knows! But
afterwards? After —

There comes the reckoning. I would save
him that.

Ferdinand. Save him dry scars that ache of
winter-nights,

Worn out self-pity and as much of knowledge
As makes old men fear judgment? Then
loose him — loose him

A' God's name ioose him to adventure early!
And trust some random pike, or half-backed
horse,

Besides what's caught in Italy, to save him.

The King. I know. I know. And yet.
. . . What stirs in the garden?

*Enter Gow and a Gardener bearing the Prince's
body*

Ferdinand. (Gods give me patience!) Gow
and a gardener

Bearing some load along in the dusk to
the dunghill.

Nay — a dead branch — But as I said, the
Prince ——

The King. They've set it down. Strange that they work so late.

Gow (setting down the body). Hearn, you un-sanctified fool while I set out our story. We found it, this side the North park wall which it had climbed to pluck nectarines from the alley. Hearn again! There was a nectarine in its hand when we found it, and the naughty brick that slipped from the coping beneath its foot and so caused its death, lies now under the wall for the King to see.

The King (above). The King to see! Why should he? Who's the man?

Gow. That is your tale. Swerve from it by so much as the breadth of my dagger and here's your instant reward. You heard not, saw not, and by the Horns of ninefold-cuckolded Jupiter you thought not nor dreamed not anything more or other!

The King. Ninefold-cuckolded Jupiter. That's
a rare oath! Shall we look closer?

Ferdinand. Not yet, my Lord! (I cannot hear
him breathe.)

Gardener. The North park wall? It was so.
Plucking nectarines. It shall be. But
how shall I say if any ask why our
Lady the Queen ——

Gow (stabs him). Thus! Hie after the Prince
and tell him y'are the first fruits of his
nectarine tree. Bleed there behind the
laurels.

The King. Why did Gow buffet the clown?
What said he? I'll go look.

Ferdinand (above). Save yourself! It is the
King!

Enter the King and Ferdinand to Gow

Gow. God save you! This was the
Prince!

The King. The Prince! Not a dead branch?
(*Uncovers the face.*)

My flesh and blood! My son! my son! my son!

Ferdinand (to Gow). I had feared something of this. And that fool yonder?

Gow. Dead, or as good. He cannot speak.

Ferdinand. Better so.

The King. "Loosed to adventure early!" Tell the tale.

Gow. Saddest truth alack! I came upon him not a half hour since, fallen from the North park wall over against the Deer-park side — dead — dead! — a nectarine in his hand that the dear lad must have climbed for, and plucked the very instant, look you, that a brick slipped on the coping. 'Tis there now. So I lifted him, but his neck was as you see — and already cold.

The King. Oh, very cold. But why should he have troubled to climb? He was free of all the fruit in my garden God knows!
. . . What, Gow?

Gow. Surely, God knows!

The King. A lad's trick. But I love him the better for it. . . . True, he's past loving. . . . And now we must tell our Queen. What a coil at a day's end! She'll grieve for him. Not as I shall, Ferdinand, but as youth for youth. They were much of the same age. Playmate for playmate. See, he wears her colours. That is the knot she gave him last — last. . . . Oh God! When was yesterday?

Ferdinand. Come in! Come in, my Lord.
There's a dew falling.

The King. He'll take no harm of it. I'll follow presently.
He's all his mother's now and none of mine—
Her very face on the bride-pillow. Yet I tricked her,

But that was later — and she never guessed.
I do not think he sinned much — he's too
young —
Much the same age as my Queen. God must
not judge him
Too hardly for such slips as youth may fall in.
But I'll entreat that Throne.
(*Prays by the body.*)

Gow. The Heavens hold up still. Earth opens
not and this dew's mere water. What shall
a man think of it all? (*To Gardener.*) Not
dead yet, sirrah? I bade you follow the
Prince. Despatch!

Gardener. Some kind soul pluck out the dag-
ger. Why did you slay me? I'd done no
wrong. I'd ha' kept it secret till my dying
day. But not now — not now! I'm dying.
The Prince fell from the Queen's chamber
window. I saw it in the nut alley. He
was ——

Ferdinand. But what made you in the nut
alley at that hour?

Gardener. No wrong. No more than another man's wife. Jocasta of the still-room. She'd kissed me good-night too; but that's over with the rest . . . I've stumbled on the Prince's beastly loves, and I pay for all. Let me pass!

Gow. Count it your fortune, honest man. You would have revealed it to your woman at the next meeting. You flesh-mongers are all one feather. (*Plucks out the dagger.*)

Go in peace and lay your death to Fortune's door.

He's sped —thank Fortune!

Ferdinand. Who knows not Fortune, gluttoned on easy thrones,

Stealing from feasts as rare to coney-catch Privily in the hedgerows for a clown,

With that same cruel lustful hand and eye,
Those nails and wedges, that one hammer and lead,

And the very gerb of long-stored lightning loosed.
Yesterday 'gainst some King.

The King. I have pursued with prayers where
my heart warns me
My soul shall overtake —

Enter the Queen

The King. Look not! Wait till I tell you
dearest. . . . Air!

“Loosed to adventure early”

. . . . I go late. (*Dies.*)

Gow. So! God hath cut off the Prince in his
pleasures. Gow, to save the King, hath
silenced one poor fool who knew how it
befell, and now the King's dead, needs only
that the Queen should kill Gow and all's
safe for her this side o' the Judgment
. . . Senor Ferdinand, the wind's east-
erly. I'm for the road.

Ferdinand. My horse is at the gate. God
speed you. Whither?

Gow. To the Duke, if the Queen does not lay
hands on me before. However it goes, I
charge you bear witness, Senor Ferdinand,
I served the old King faithfully. To the
death, Senor Ferdinand — to the death!

THE WISHING CAPS

Life's all getting and giving,
I've only myself to give.
What shall I do for a living?
I've only one life to live.
End it? I'll not find another.
Spend it? But how shall I best?
Sure the wise plan is to live like a man
And Luck may look after the rest!
Largesse! Largesse, Fortune!
Give or hold at your will.
If I've no care for Fortune
Fortune must follow me still.

Bad Luck, she is never a lady
But the commonest wench on the street,
Shuffling, shabby and shady,
Shameless to pass or meet.
Walk with her once — it's a weakness!
Talk to her twice — it's a crime!

Thrust her away when she gives you "good day"
And the besom won't board you next time.
Largesse! Largesse, Fortune!
What is Your Ladyship's mood?
If I've no care for Fortune,
My Fortune is bound to be good!

Good Luck she is never a lady
But the cursedest quean alive!
Tricksey, wincing and jady,
Kittle to lead or drive.
Greet her — she's hailing a stranger!
Meet her — she's busking to leave.
Let her alone for a shrew to the bone,
And the hussy comes plucking your sleeve!
Largesse! Largesse, Fortune!
I'll neither follow nor flee.
If I don't run after Fortune
Fortune must run after me!

“BY THE HOOF OF THE WILD GOAT”

By the Hoof of the Wild Goat uptossed
From the cliff where she lay in the Sun
Fell the Stone
To the Tarn where the daylight is lost
So she fell from the light of the Sun
And alone!

Now the fall was ordained from the first
With the Goat and the Cliff and the Tarn
But the Stone
Knows only her life is accursed
As she sinks from the light of the Sun
And alone!

Oh Thou Who has builded the World,
Oh Thou Who has lighted the Sun,
Oh Thou Who has darkened the Tarn,
Judge Thou

The sin of the Stone that was hurled
By the goat from the light of the Sun,
As she sinks in the mire of the Tarn,
Even now — even now — even now!

CHAPTER HEADINGS

"BEAST AND MAN IN INDIA"

They killed a child to please the Gods
In earth's young penitence
And I have bled in that Babe's stead
Because of innocence.

I bear the sins of sinful men
That have no sin of my own,
They drive me forth to Heaven's wrath
Unpastured and alone.

I am the meat of sacrifice
The ransom of man's guilt
For they give my life to the altar-knife
Wherever shrine is built.

The Goat.

Between the waving tufts of jungle-grass,
Up from the river as the twilight falls,
Across the dust-beclouded plain they pass
On to the village walls.

Great is the sword and mighty is the pen
But greater far the labouring ploughman's
blade,
For on its oxen and its husbandmen
An Empire's strength is laid.

The Oxen.

The torn boughs trailing o'er the tusks aslant,
The saplings reeling in the path he trod,
Declare his might — our lord the Elephant
Chief of the ways of God.

The black bulk heaving where the oxen pant,
The bowed head toiling where the guns careen,
Declare our might — our slave the Elephant
And servant of the Queen.

The Elephant.

Dark children of the mere and marsh
Wallow and waste and lea,
Outcaste they wait at the village gate
With folk of low degree.

Their pasture is in no man's land,
Their food the cattle's scorn,
Their rest is mire and their desire
The thicket and the thorn.

But woe to those who break their sleep,
And woe to those who dare
To rouse the herd-bull from his keep
The wild boar from his lair!

Pigs and Buffaloes.

The beasts are very wise,
Their mouths are clean of lies,
They talk one to the other,
Bullock to bullock's brother
Resting after their labours,
Each in stall with his neighbours.
But man with goad and whip,
Breaks up their fellowship,
Shouts in their silky ears
Filling their souls with fears,
When he has ploughed the land,
He says; — "They understand."

But the beasts in stall together
Freed from the yoke and tether
Say as the torn flanks smoke —
“Nay, ’twas the whip that spoke.”

LIFE'S HANDICAP

The doors were wide, the story saith,
Out of the night came the patient wraith
He might not speak and he could not stir
A hair of the Baron's minniver.
Speechless and strengthless a shadow thin
He roved the castle to find his kin.
And oh! ’twas a piteous sight to see
The dumb ghost follow his enemy!

The Return of Imray.

Before my spring I garnered autumn's gain,
Out of her time my field was white with grain,
The year gave up her secrets, to my woe.
Forced and deflowered each sick season lay
In mystery of increase and decay
I saw the sunset ere men see the day
Who am too wise in all I should not know.

Without Benefit of Clergy.

MANY INVENTIONS

And if ye doubt the tale I tell
Steer through the South Pacific swell
Go where the branching coral hives
Unending strife of endless lives,
Where, leagued about the 'wilderer boat
The rainbow jellies fill and float
And lilting where the laver lingers
The starfish trips on all her fingers;

Where 'neath his myriad spines ashock
The sea-egg ripples down the rock,
An orange wonder daily guessed
From darkness where the cuttles rest
Moored o'er the darker deeps that hide
The blind white sea-snake and his bride
Who, drowsing, nose the long-lost ships
Let down through darkness to their lips.

A Matter of Fact.

There's a convict more in the Central Jail
Behind the old mud wall;
There's a lifter less on the Border trail
And the Queen's peace over all,
Dear boys,
The Queen's peace over all!

For we must bear our leader's blame,
On us the shame will fall,
If we lift our hand from a fettered land
And the Queen's peace over all
Dear boys,
The Queen's peace over all!

The Lost Legion.

'Less you want your toes trod off you'd better
get back at once,

For the bullocks are walking two by two,
The byles are walking two by two,
And the elephants bring the guns.

Ho! Yuss!

Great — big — long — black — forty-pounder
guns

Jiggery-jolty to and fro,

Each as big as a launch in tow —

Blind — dumb — broad-breeched — beggars o'
battering-guns.

My Lord the Elephant.

All the world over, nursing their scars,
Sit the old fighting-men broke in the wars —
Sit the old fighting-men, surly and grim,
Mocking the lilt of the conquerors' hymn.

Dust of the battle o'erwhelmed them and hid.
Fame never found them for aught that they did.
Wounded and spent to the lazar they drew,
Lining the road where the Legions roll
through.

Sons of the Laurel who press to your meed,
(Worthy God's pity most — ye who succeed!)
Ere you go triumphing, crowned, to the stars,
Pity poor fighting men, broke in the wars!

Collected.

KIM

Unto whose use the pregnant suns are poised
With idiot moons and stars retracting stars
Creep thou between — thy coming's all un-
noised

Heaven hath her high, as Earth her baser wars.
Heir to these tumults, this affright, that fray
(By Adam's, father's, own, sin bound alway)
Peer up, draw out thy horoscope and say
Which planet mends thy threadbare fate, or
mars.

SONG OF THE RED WAR-BOAT

(683 A.D.)

Shove off from the wharf-edge! Steady!
Watch for a smooth! Give way!
If she feels the lop already
She'll stand on her head in the bay.
It's ebb — it's dusk — it's blowing
The shoals are a mile of white,
But (snatch her along!) we're going
To find our master to-night.

*For we hold that in all disaster
Of shipwreck, storm, or sword,
A Man must stand by his Master
When once he has pledged his word.*

Raging seas have we rowed in
But we seldom saw them thus,
Our master is angry with Odin —
Odin is angry with us!
Heavy odds have we taken,
But never before such odds.

The Gods know they are forsaken,
We must risk the wrath of the Gods!

Over the crest she flies from,
Into its hollow she drops,
Cringes and clears her eyes from
The wind-torn breaker-tops,
Ere out on the shrieking shoulder
Of a hill-high surge she drives.
Meet her! Meet her and hold her!
Pull for your scoundrel lives!

The thunders bellow and clamour
The harm that they mean to do!
There goes Thor's own Hammer
Cracking the dark in two!
Close! But the blow has missed her,
Here comes the wind of the blow!
Row or the squall 'll twist her
Broadside on to it! — *Row!*

Heark 'ee, Thor of the Thunder,
We are not here for a jest —
For wager, warfare or plunder,
Or to put your power to test.

This work is none of our wishing
We would house at home if we might —
But our master is wrecked out fishing.
We go to find him to-night.

*For we hold that in all disaster —
As the Gods Themselves have said —
A Man must stand by his Master
Till one of the two is dead.*

That is our way of thinking,
Now you can do as you will.
While we try to save her from sinking,
And hold her head to it still.
Bale her and keep her moving,
Or she'll break her back in the trough. . . .
Who said the weather's improving,
Or the swells are taking off?

Sodden, and chafed and aching,
Gone in the loins and knees —
No matter — the day is breaking,
And there's far less weight to the seas!
Up mast, and finish baling —
In oars, and out with the mead —

The rest will be two-reef sailing. . . .
That was a night indeed!

*But we hold that in all disaster
(And faith, we have found it true!)
If only you stand by your master,
The Gods will stand by you!*

BLUE ROSES

Roses red and roses white
Plucked I for my love's delight.
She would none of all my posies —
Bade me gather her blue roses.

Half the world I wandered through,
Seeking where such flowers grew
Half the world unto my quest
Answered me with laugh and jest.

Home I came at wintertide
But my silly love had died
Seeking with her latest breath
Roses from the arms of Death.

It may be beyond the grave
She shall find what she would have.
Mine was but an idle quest —
Roses white and red are best.

BUTTERFLIES

Eyes aloft, over dangerous places,
The children follow the butterflies
And, in the sweat of their upturned faces,
Slash with a net at the empty skies.

So it goes they fall amid brambles.
And sting their toes on the nettle-tops,
Till after a thousand scratches and scrambles,
They wipe their brows and the hunting stops.

Then to quiet them comes their father
And stills the riot of pain and grief,
Saying, "Little ones, go and gather
Out of my garden a cabbage-leaf.

"You will find on it whorls and clots of
Dull gray eggs that, properly fed,
Turn, by way of the worm, to lots of
Glorious butterflies raised from the dead. . . ."

“Heaven is beautiful, Earth is ugly”
The three-dimensioned preacher saith,
So we must not look where the snail and the slug lie
For Psyche’s birth. . . . And that is our
death!

MY LADY'S LAW

The Law whereby my lady moves
Was never Law to me,
But 'tis enough that she approves
Whatever Law it be.

For in that Law, and by that Law,
My constant course I'll steer;
Not that I heed or deem it dread,
But that she holds it dear.

Tho Asia sent for my content
Her richest argosies,
Those would I spurn, and bid return,
If that should give her ease.

With equal heart I'd watch depart
Each spicèd sail from sight,
Sans bitterness, desiring less
Great gear than her delight.

Though Kings made swift with many a gift
My proven sword to hire —

I would not go nor serve 'em so —
Except at her desire.

With even mind, I'd put behind
Adventure and acclaim,
And clean give o'er, esteeming more
Her favour than my fame.

Yet such am I, yea such am I —
Sore bond and freest free,
The Law that sways my lady's ways
Is mystery to me!

THE NURSING SISTER

(Maternity Hospital)

Our sister sayeth such and such,
And we must bow to her behests;
Our sister toileth overmuch,
Our little maid that hath no breasts.

A field untilled, a web unwove,
A flower withheld from sun or bee,
An alien in the courts of Love,
And — teacher unto such as we!

We love her, but we laugh the while,
We laugh, but sobs are mixed with laughter;
Our sister hath no time to smile,
She knows not what must follow after

Wind of the South, arise and blow,
From beds of spice thy locks shake free;
Breathe on her heart that she may know,
Breathe on her eyes that she may see.

Alas! we vex her with our mirth,
And maze her with most tender scorn,
Who stands beside the gates of Birth,
Herself a child — a child unborn!

*Our sister sayeth such and such,
And we must bow to her behests;
Our sister toileth overmuch,
Our little maid that hath no breasts.*

THE LOVE SONG OF HAR DYAL

Alone upon the housetops to the North
I turn and watch the lightning in the sky —
The glamour of thy footsteps in the North
Come back to me, Beloved, or I die.

Below my feet the still bazar is laid —
Far, far below the weary camels lie —
The camels and the captives of thy raid
Come back to me, Beloved, or I die!

My father's wife is old and harsh with years
And drudge of all my father's house am I —
My bread is sorrow and my drink is tears.
Come back to me, Beloved, or I die!

A DEDICATION

And they were stronger hands than mine
That digged the Ruby from the earth —
More cunning brains that made it worth
The large desire of a king,
And stouter hearts that through the brine
Went down the perfect Pearl to bring.

Lo, I have wrought in common clay
Rude figures of a rough-hewn race,
Since pearls strew not the market place
In this my town of banishment
Where with the shifting dust I play,
And eat the bread of discontent.

Yet is there life in that I make.
O thou who knowest, turn and see —
As thou hast power over me
So have I power over these
Because I wrought them for thy sake,
And breathed in them mine agonies.

Small mirth was in the making — now
I lift the cloth that cloaks the clay,
And, wearied, at thy feet I lay
My wares, ere I go forth to sell.
The long bazar will praise, but thou —
Heart of my heart — have I done well?

MOTHER O' MINE

If I were hanged on the highest hill,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose love would follow me still,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

If I were drowned in the deepest sea,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose tears would come down to me,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

If I were damned of body and soul,
I know whose prayers would make me whole,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

THE ONLY SON

She dropped the bar, she shot the bolt, she fed
the fire anew,

For she heard a whimper under the sill and a
great grey paw came through.

The fresh flame comforted the hut and shone on
the roof-beam,

And the Only Son lay down again and dreamed
that he dreamed a dream.

The last ash fell from the withered log with the
click of a falling spark,

And the Only Son woke up again, and called
across the dark; —

“Now was I born of womankind and laid in a
mother’s breast?

For I have dreamed of a shaggy hide whereon I
went to rest?

And was I born of womankind and laid on a
father’s arm?

For I have dreamed of clashing teeth that
guarded me from harm.

And was I born an Only Son and did I play
alone?

For I have dreamed of comrades twain that bit
me to the bone.

And did I break the barley-cake and steep it in
the tyre?

For I have dreamed of a youngling kid new-riven
from the byre.

For I have dreamed of a midnight sky and a
midnight call to blood

And red-mouthed shadows racing by, that thrust
me from my food.

'Tis an hour yet and an hour yet to the rising of
the moon,

But I can see the black roof-tree as plain as it
were noon.

'Tis a league and a league to the Lena Falls where
the trooping blackbuck go;

But I can hear the little fawn that bleats behind
the doe.

'Tis a league and a league to the Lena Falls where
the crop and the upland meet,

But I can smell the wet dawn-wind that wakes
the sprouting wheat.

Unbar the door, I may not bide, but I must out
and see

If those are wolves that wait outside or my own
kin to me!"

* * * *

She loosed the bar, she slid the bolt, she opened
the door anon,

And a grey bitch-wolf came out of the dark and
fawned on the Only Son!

ROMULUS AND REMUS

Oh, little did the Wolf-Child care —
When first he planned his home,
What city should arise and bear
The weight and state of Rome.

A shiftless, westward-wandering tramp,
Checked by the Tiber flood,
He reared a wall around his camp
Of uninspired mud.

But when his brother leaped the Wall
And mocked its height and make,
He guessed the future of it all
And slew him for its sake.

Swift was the blow — swift as the thought
Which showed him in that hour
How unbelief may bring to naught
The early steps of Power.

Foreseeing Time's imperilled hopes
Of Glory, Grace, and Love —

All singers, Cæsars, artists, Popes —
Would fail if Remus throve.

He sent his brother to the Gods,
And, when the fit was o'er,
Went on collecting turves and clods
To build the Wall once more!

THE EGG-SHELL

The wind took off with the sunset —
The fog came up with the tide,
When the Witch of the North took an Egg-shell
With a little Blue Devil inside.
“Sink,” she said, “or swim,” she said,
“It’s all you will get from me.
And that is the finish of him!” she said,
And the Egg-shell went to sea.

The wind fell dead with the midnight —
The fog shut down like a sheet,
When the Witch of the North heard the Egg-shell
Feeling by hand for a fleet.
“Get!” she said, “or you’re gone,” she said,
But the little Blue Devil said “No!”
“The sights are just coming on,” he said,
And he let the Whitehead go.

The wind got up with the morning —
And the fog blew off with the rain,

When the Witch of the North saw the Egg-shell
And the little Blue Devil again.

“Did you swim?” she said. “Did you sink?”
she said,

And the Little Blue Devil replied:

“For myself I swam, but I think,” he said,

“There’s somebody sinking outside.”

THE KING'S TASK

After the sack of the City when Rome was sunk
to a name

In the years that the lights were darkened, or
ever St. Wilfrid came

Low on the borders of Britain (the ancient poets
sing)

Between the Cliff and the Forest there ruled a
Saxon King.

Stubborn all were his people from cottar to
overlord —

Not to be cowed by the cudgel, scarce to be
schooled by the sword;

Quick to turn at their pleasure, cruel to cross
in their mood,

And set on paths of their choosing as the hogs
of Andred's Wood.

Laws they made in the Witan — the laws of
flaying and fine —

Common, loppage and pannage, the theft and
the track of kine —

Statutes of tun and market for the fish and the
malt and the meal —

The tax on the Bramber packhorse and the tax
on the Hastings keel.

Over the graves of the Druids and under the
wreck of Rome

Rudely but surely they bedded the plinth of the
days to come.

Behind the feet of the Legions and before the
Norseman's ire

Rudely but greatly begat they the framing of
state and shire.

Rudely but deeply they laboured, and their
labour stands till now

If we trace on our ancient headlands the twist of
their eight-ox plough.

There came a king from Hamtun, by Bosenham
he came,

He filled Use with slaughter, and Lewes he gave
to flame.

He smote while they sat in the Witan — sudden
he smote and sore,

That his fleet was gathered at Selsea ere they
mustered at Cymen's Ore.

Blithe went the Saxons to battle, by down and
wood and mere,

But thrice the acorns ripened ere the western
mark was clear.

Thrice was the beechmast gathered and the
Beltane fires burned

Thrice, and the beeves were salted thrice ere
the host returned.

They drove that king from Hamtun, by Bosen-
ham o'erthrown,

Out of Rugnor to Wilton they made his land
their own.

Camps they builded at Gilling, at Basing and
Alresford,

But wrath abode in the Saxons from cottar to
overlord.

Wrath at the weary war-game, at the foe that
snapped and ran

Wolf-wise feigning and flying, and wolf-wise
snatching his man.

Wrath for their spears unready, their levies new
to the blades —

Shame for the helpless sieges and the scornful
ambuscades.

At hearth and tavern and market, wherever
the tale was told,

Shame and wrath had the Saxons because of
their boasts of old.

And some would drink and deny it, and some
would pray and atone;

But the most part, after their anger, avouched
that the sin was their own.

Wherefore, girding together, up to the Witan
they came,

And as they had shouldered their bucklers so
did they shoulder their blame.

For that was the wont of the Saxons (the
ancient poets sing)

And first they spoke in the Witan and then they
spoke to the King:

“Edward King of the Saxons, thou knowest
from sire to son,

“One is the King and his People — in gain and
ungain one.

“Count we the gain together. With doubtings
and spread dismays

“We have broken a foolish people — but after
many days.

“Count we the loss together. Warlocks hampered our arms

“We were tricked as by magic, we were turned as by charms.

“We went down to the battle and the road was plain to keep

“But our angry eyes were holden, and we struck as they strike in sleep —

“Men new shaken from slumber, sweating, with eyes a-stare

“Little blows uncertain dealt on the useless air.

“Also a vision betrayed us and a lying tale made bold

“That we looked to hold what we had not and to have what we did not hold:

“That a shield should give us shelter — that a sword should give us power

“A shield snatched up at a venture and a hilt scarce handled an hour:

“That being rich in the open, we should be strong in the close —

“And the Gods would sell us a cunning for the day that we met our foes.

“This was the work of wizards, but not with our
foe they bide

“In our own camp we took them, and their
names are Sloth and Pride.

“Our pride was before the battle; our sloth ere
we lifted spear,

“But hid in the heart of the people as the fever
hides in the mere,

“Waiting only the war-game, the heat of the
strife to rise

“As the ague fumes round Oxeney when the
rotting reed-bed dries.

“But now we are purged of that fever —
cleansed by the letting of blood

“Something leaner of body — something keener
of mood.

“And the men new freed from the levies return
to the fields again,

“Matching a hundred battles, cottar and lord
and thane,

“And they talk aloud in the temples where the
ancient wargods are.

“They thumb and mock and belittle the holy
harness of war.

“They jest at the sacred chariots, the robes and
the gilded staff.

“These things fill them with laughter, they lean
on their spears and laugh.

“The men grown old in the war-game, hither and
thither they range—

“And scorn and laughter together are sire and
dam of change;

“And change may be good or evil — but we
know not what it will bring

“Therefore our King must teach us. That is
thy task, O King!”

POSEIDON'S LAW

When the robust and Brass-bound Man com-
missioned first for sea

His fragile raft, Poseidon laughed, and
“Mariner,” said he,

“Behold, a Law immutable I lay on thee and
thine,

That never shall ye act or tell a falsehood at my
shrine.

“Let Zeus adjudge your landward kin whose
votive meal and salt

At easy-cheated altars win oblivion for the fault,
But you the unhoodwinked wave shall test —
the immediate gulf condemn —

Except ye owe the Fates a jest, be slow to jest
with them.

“Ye shall not clear by Greekly speech, nor cozen
from your path

The twinkling shoal, the leeward beach, and
Hadria's white-lipped wrath;

Nor tempt with painted cloth for wood my
fraud-avenging hosts;
Nor make at all, or all make good, your bulwarks
and your boasts.

“Now and henceforward serve unshod, through
wet and wakeful shifts,
A present and oppressive God, but take, to aid,
my gifts —
The wide and windward-opening eye, the large
and lavish hand,
The soul that cannot tell a lie — except upon the
land!”

In dromond and in catafract — wet, wakeful,
windward-eyed —
He kept Poseidon's Law intact (his ship and
freight beside),
But, once discharged the dromond's hold, the
bireme beached once more,
Splendaciously mendacious rolled the Brass-
bound Man ashore.

The thranite now and thalamite are pressures
low and high,
And where three hundred blades bit white the
twin-propellers ply:
The God that hailed, the keel that sailed, are
changed beyond recall,
But the robust and Brass-bound Man he is not
changed at all!

From Punt returned, from Phormio's Flëet,
from Javan and Gadire,
He strongly occupies the seat about the tavern
fire,
And, moist with much Falernian or smoked
Massilian juice,
Revenge there the Brass-bound Man his long-
enforced truce!

A TRUTHFUL SONG

The Bricklayer:

*I tell this tale, which is strictly true,
Just by way of convincing you
How very little, since things were made,
Things have altered in the building trade.*

A year ago, come the middle of March,
We was building flats near the Marble Arch,
When a thin young man with coal-black hair
Came up to watch us working there.

Now there wasn't a trick in brick or stone
That this young man hadn't seen or known;
Nor there wasn't a tool from trowel to maul
But this young man could use 'em all!

Then up and spoke the plumbyers bold,
Which was laying the pipes for the hot and cold;
"Since you with us have made so free,
Will you kindly say what your name might be?"

The young man kindly answered them;
“It might be Lot or Methusalem,
Or it might be Moses (a man I hate)
Whereas it is Pharaoh surnamed the Great.

“Your glazing is new and your plumbing’s
 strange,
But otherwise I perceive no change,
And in less than a month if you do as I bid
I’d learn you to build me a Pyramid!”

The Sailor:

*I tell this tale, which is stricter true,
Just by way of convincing you
How very little, since things was made,
Things have altered in the shipwright’s trade.*

In Blackwall Basin yesterday
A China barque re-fitting lay;
When a fat old man with snow-white hair
Came up to watch us working there.

Now there wasn’t a knot which the riggers
 knew
But the old man made it — and better too;

Nor there wasn't a sheet, or a lift, or a brace,
But the old man knew its lead and place.

Then up and spake the caulkyers bold,
Which was packing the pump in the after-
hold;

"Since you with us have made so free,
Will you kindly tell what your namemight be?"

The old man kindly answered them;
"It might be Japheth, it might be Shem,
Or it might be Ham (though his skin was
dark)

Whereas it is Noah, commanding the Ark.

"Your wheel is new and your pumps are
strange,

But otherwise I perceive no change,
And in less than a week, if she did not ground,
I'd sail this hooker the wide world round!"

Both:

*We tell these tales, which are strictest true,
Just by way of convincing you,
How very little, since things was made,
Anything alters in any one's trade.*

A SMUGGLER'S SONG

If you wake at midnight, and hear a horse's feet,
Don't go drawing back the blind, or looking in
the street,

Them that ask no questions isn't told a lie.

Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentle-
men go by!

Five and twenty ponies,

Trotting through the dark —

Brandy for the Parson,

'Baccy for the Clerk;

Laces for a lady, letters for a spy,

And watch the wall, my darling, while the
Gentlemen go by!

Running round the woodlump if you chance to
find

Little barrels, roped and tarred, all full of
brandy-wine,

Don't you shout to come and look, nor use 'em
for your play.

Put the brishwood back again — and they'll be
gone next day!

If you see the stable-door setting open wide;
If you see a tired horse lying down inside;
If your mother mends a coat cut about and
tore;
If the lining's wet and warm — don't you ask
no more!

If you meet King George's men, dressed in blue
and red,
You be careful what you say, and mindful what
is said.
If they call you "pretty maid," and chuck you
'neath the chin,
Don't you tell where no one is, nor yet where no
one's been!

Knocks and footsteps round the house —
whistles after dark —
You've no call for running out till the house-
dogs bark.
Trusty's here, and *Pincher's* here, and see how
dumb they lie —
They don't fret to follow when the Gentlemen
go by!

If you do as you've been told, 'likely there's a
chance,

You'll be give a dainty doll, all the way from
France,

With a cap of Valenciennes, and a velvet hood —
A present from the Gentlemen, along o' being
good!

Five and twenty ponies,
Trotting through the dark,
Brandy for the Parson,
'Baccy for the Clerk.

Them that asks no questions isn't told a lie —
Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentle-
men go by!

KING HENRY VII AND THE SHIPWRIGHTS

(A.D. 1487)

Harry, our King in England, from London town
is gone,

And comen to Hamull on the Hoke in the countie
of Suthampton.

For there lay *The Mary of the Tower*, his ship of
war so strong,

And he would discover, certaynely, if his ship-
wrights did him wrong.

He told not none of his setting forth, nor yet
where he would go,

(But only my Lord of Arundel) and meanly did
he show,

In an old jerkin and patched hose that no man
might him mark,

With his frieze hood and cloak above, he looked
like any clerk.

He was at Hamull on the Hoke about the hour of
the tide,

And saw the *Mary* haled into dock, the winter to
abide,

With all her tackle and habilaments which are
the King his own;

But then ran on his false shipwrights and
stripped her to the bone.

They heaved the main-mast overboard, that was
of a trusty tree,

And they wrote down it was spent and lost by
force of weather at sea.

But they sawen it into planks and strakes as far
as it might go,

To maken beds for their own wives and little
children also.

There was a knave called Slingawai, he crope
beneath the deck,

Crying: "Good felawes, come and see! The
ship is nigh a wreck!

For the storm that took our tall main-mast, it
blew so fierce and fell,

Alack! it hath taken the kettles and pans, and
this brass pott as well!"

With that he set the pott on his head and hied
him up the hatch,

While all the shipwrights ran below to find what
they might snatch;

All except Bob Brygandyne and he was a yeo-
man good,

He caught Slingawai round the waist and threw
him on to the mud.

“I have taken plank and rope and nail, without
the King his leave,

After the custom of Portesmouth, but I will not
suffer a thief.

Nay, never lift up thy hand at me! There’s no
clean hands in the trade —

Steal in measure,” quo’ Brygandyne. “There’s
measure in all things made!”

“Gramercy, yeoman!” said our King. “Thy
council liketh me.”

And he pulled a whistle out of his neck and
whistled whistles three.

Then came my Lord of Arundel pricking across
the down,

And behind him the Mayor and Burgesses of
merry Suthampton town.

They drew the naughty shipwrights up, with the
kettles in their hands,
And bound them round the forecastle to wait
the King's commands.
But "Since ye have made your beds," said the
King, "ye needs must lie thereon.
For the sake of your wives and little ones —
felawes, get you gone!"

When they had beaten Slingawai, out of his own
lips
Our King appointed Brygandyne to be Clerk of
all his ships.
"Nay, never lift up thy hands to me — there's
no clean hands in the trade.
But steal in measure," said Harry our King.
"There's measure in all things made!"

*God speed the "Mary of the Tower," the "Sover-
eign" and "Grace Dieu,"
The "Sweepstakes" and the "Mary Fortune,"
and the "Henry of Bristol" too!*

*All tall ships that sail on the sea, or in our harbours
stand,*

*That they may keep measure with Harry our King
and peace in Engeland!*

THE WET LITANY

When the water's countenance
Blurs 'twixt glance and second glance;
Then our tattered smokes forerun
Ashen 'neath a silvered sun;
When the curtain of the haze
Shuts upon our helpless ways —
Hear the Channel Fleet at sea;
Libera nos Domine!

When the engines' bated pulse
Scarcely thrills the nosing hulls;
When the wash along the side
Sounds, a sudden, magnified;
When the intolerable blast
Marks each blindfold minute passed;

When the fog-buoy's squattering flight
Guides us through the haggard night;
When the warning bugle blows;

When the lettered doorways close;
When our brittle townships press,
Impotent, on emptiness;

When the unseen leadsmen lean
Questioning a deep unseen;
When their lessened count they tell
To a bridge invisible;
When the hid and perilous
Cliffs return our cry to us;

When the treble thickness spread
Swallows up our next-ahead;
When her siren's frightened whine
Shows her sheering out of line;
When, her passage undiscerned,
We must turn where she has turned,
Hear the Channel Fleet at sea:
Libera nos Domine!

THE BALLAD OF MINEPIT SHAW

About the time that taverns shut
And men can buy no beer,
Two lads went up to the keepers' hut
To steal Lord Pelham's deer.

Night and the liquor was in their heads —
They laughed and talked no bounds,
Till they waked the keepers on their beds
And the keepers loosed the hounds.

They had killed a hart, they had killed a hind,
Ready to carry away,
When they heard a whimper down the wind
And they heard a bloodhound bay.

They took and ran across the fern,
Their crossbows in their hand,
Till they met a man with a green lantern
That called and bade 'em stand.

“What are ye doing, O Flesh and Blood,
And what’s your foolish will,
That you must break into Minepit Wood
And wake the Folk of the Hill?”

“Oh, we’ve broke into Lord Pelham’s park,
And killed Lord Pelham’s deer,
And if ever you heard a little dog bark
You’ll know why we come here.

“We ask you let us go our way,
As fast as we can flee,
For if ever you heard a bloodhound bay
You’ll know how pressed we be.”

“Oh, lay your crossbows on the bank
And drop the knife from your hand,
And though the hounds are at your flank
I’ll save you where you stand!”

They laid their crossbows on the bank,
They threw their knives in the wood,
And the ground before them opened and sank
And saved ’em where they stood.

“Oh, what’s the roaring in our ears
That strikes us well-nigh dumb?”

“Oh, that is just how things appears
According as they come.”

“What are the stars before our eyes
That strike us well-nigh blind?”

“Oh, that is just how things arise
According as you find.”

“And why’s our bed so hard to the bones
Excepting where it’s cold?”

“Oh, that’s because it is precious stones
Excepting where ’tis gold.

“Think it over as you stand
For I tell you without fail
If you haven’t got into Fairyland
You’re not in Lewes Gaol.”

All night long they thought of it
And, come the dawn, they saw
They’d tumbled into a great old pit,
At the bottom of Minepit Shaw.

And the keepers' hound had followed 'em close,
And broke her neck in the fall;
So they picked up their knives and their cross-
bows
And buried the dog. That's all.

But whether the man was a poacher too
Or a Pharisee* so bold —
I reckon there's more things told than are true.
And more things true than are told!

*A fairy.

HERIOT'S FORD

“What’s that that hirples at my side?”

The foe that you must fight, my lord.

“That rides as fast as I can ride?”

The shadow of your might, my lord.

“Then wheel my horse against the foe!”

He’s down and overpast, my lord.

You war against the sunset glow,

The judgment follows fast, my lord!

“Oh who will stay the sun’s descent?”

King Joshua he is dead, my lord.

“I need an hour to repent!”

’Tis what our sister said, my lord.

“Oh do not slay me in my sins!”

You’re safe awhile with us, my lord.

“Nay, kill me ere my fear begins,”

We would not serve you thus, my lord.

“Where is the doom that I must face?”

Three little leagues away, my lord.

“Then mend the horses’ laggard pace!”

We need them for next day, my lord.

“Next day — next day! Unloose my cords!”

Our sister needed none, my lord.

You have no mind to face our swords,

And — where can cowards run, my lord?

“You would not kill the soul alive?”

’Twas thus our sister cried, my lord.

“I dare not die with none to shrive,”

But so our sister died, my lord.

“Then wipe the sweat from brow and cheek,”

It runnels forth afresh, my lord.

“Uphold me — for the flesh is weak”

You’ve finished with the Flesh, my lord.

FRANKIE'S TRADE

Old Horn to All Atlantic said:

(A-hay O! To me O!)

“Now where did Frankie learn his trade?
For he ran me down with a three-reef mains’le.”

(All round the Horn!)

Atlantic answered: — “Not from me!
You’d better ask the cold North Sea,
For he ran me down under all plain canvas.”

(All round the Horn!)

The North Sea answered: — “He’s my man,
For he came to me when he began —
Frankie Drake in an open coaster.”

(All round the Sands!)

“I caught him young and I used him sore,
So you never shall startle Frankie more,
Without capsizing Earth and her waters.”

(All round the Sands!)

“I did not favour him at all.

I made him pull and I made him haul —

And stand his trick with the common sailors.

(All round the Sands!)

“I froze him stiff and I fogged him blind,

And kicked him home with his road to find

By what he could see in a three-day snow-storm.

(All round the Sands!)

“I learned him his trade o’ winter nights,

’Twixt Mardyke Fort and Dunkirk lights

On a five-knot tide with the forts a-firing.

(All round the Sands!)

“Before his beard began to shoot,

I showed him the length of the Spaniard’s foot —

And I reckon he clapped the boot on it later.

(All round the Sands!)

“If there’s a risk which you can make,

That’s worse than he was used to take

Nigh every week in the way of his business;

(All round the Sands!)

“If there’s a trick that you can try,
Which he hasn’t met in time gone by,
Not once or twice, but ten times over;
 (*All round the Sands!*)

“If you can teach him aught that’s new,
 (*A-hay O! To me O!*)
I’ll give you Bruges and Newport too,
And the ten tall churches that stand between
 ’em.”

Storm along my gallant Captains!
 (*All round the Horn!*)

THE JUGGLER'S SONG

When the drums begin to beat
Down the street,
When the poles are fetched and guyed,
When the tight-rope's stretched and tied,
When the dance-girls make salaam,
When the snake-bag wakes alarm,
When the pipes set up their drone,
When the sharp-edged knives are thrown,
When the red-hot coals are shown,
To be swallowed by and bye —
Arré Brethren, here come I!

Stripped to loin-cloth in the sun
Search me well and watch me close!
Tell me how my tricks are done —
Tell me how the mango grows?

Give a man who is not made
To his trade
Swords to fling and catch again,
Coins to ring and snatch again,

Men to harm and cure again,
Snakes to charm and lure again —
He'll be hurt by his own blade,
By his serpents disobeyed,
By his clumsiness bewrayed,
By the people laughed to scorn.
So 'tis not with juggler born!

Pinch of dust or withered flower,
Chance-flung nut or borrowed staff,
Serve his need and shore his power
Bind the spell or loose the laugh!

THORKILD'S SONG

There's no wind along these seas,
Out oars for Stavanger!
Forward all for Stavanger!
So we must wake the white-ash breeze,
Let fall for Stavanger!
A long pull for Stavanger!

Oh, hear the benches creak and strain!
(A long pull for Stavanger!)
She thinks she smells the Northland rain!
(A long pull for Stavanger!)

She thinks she smells the Northland snow,
And she's as glad as we to go.

She thinks she smells the Northland rime,
And the dear dark nights of winter-time.

She wants to be at her own home pier,
To shift her sails and standing gear.

She wants to be in her winter-shed,
To strip herself and go to bed.

Her very bolts are sick for shore,
And we — we want it ten times more!

So all you Gods that love brave men,
Send us a three-reef gale again!

Send us a gale, and watch us come,
With close-cropped canvas slashing home!

*But — there's no wind on all these seas,
A long pull for Stavanger!*
So we must wake the white-ash breeze,
A long pull for Stavanger!

SONG OF THE MEN'S SIDE

(Neolithic)

Once we feared The Beast — when he followed
us we ran,

Ran very fast though we knew
It was not right that The Beast should master
Man;

But what could we Flint-workers do?
The Beast only grinned at our spears round his
ears —

Grinned at the hammers that we made;
But now we will hunt him for the life with the
Knife —

And this is the Buyer of the Blade!

Room for his shadow on the grass — let it pass!

To left and right — stand clear!

This is the Buyer of the Blade — be afraid!

This is the great god Tyr!

Tyr thought hard till he hammered out a plan,
For he knew it was not right

(And it *is* not right) that The Beast should
master Man;

So he went to the Children of the Night.

He begged a Magic Knife of their make for our
sake.

When he begged for the Knife they said:

“The price of the Knife you would buy is an eye!”

And that was the price he paid.

Tell it to the Barrows of the Dead — run ahead!

Shout it so the Women's Side can hear!

This is the Buyer of the Blade — be afraid!

This is the great god Tyr!

Our women and our little ones may walk on the
Chalk,

As far as we can see them and beyond.

We shall not be anxious for our sheep when we keep
Tally at the shearing-pond.

We can eat with both our elbows on our knees,
if we please,

We can sleep after meals in the sun;

For Shepherd of the Twilight is dismayed at the
Blade,

Feet-in-the-Night have run!

Dog-without-a-Master goes away (Hai, Tyr
aie!),
Devil-in-the-Dusk has run!

Then:

Room for his shadow on the grass — let it pass!

To left and right — stand clear!

This is the Buyer of the Blade — be afraid!

This is the great god Tyr!

THE FOUR ANGELS

As Adam lay a-dreaming beneath the Apple Tree
The Angel of the Earth came down, and offered
Earth in fee.

But Adam did not need it,
Nor the plough he would not speed it,
Singing: — “Earth and Water, Air and Fire,
What more can mortal man desire?”
(The Apple Tree’s in bud.)

As Adam lay a-dreaming beneath the Apple Tree
The Angel of the Waters offered all the Seas in
fee.

But Adam would not take ’em,
Nor the ships he wouldn’t make ’em,
Singing: — “Water, Earth and Air and Fire,
What more can mortal man desire?”
(The Apple Tree’s in leaf.)

As Adam lay a-dreaming beneath the Apple Tree
The Angel of the Air he offered all the Air in fee.
But Adam did not crave it,

Nor the flight he wouldn't brave it,
Singing: — "Air and Water, Earth and Fire,
What more can mortal man desire?"

(The Apple Tree's in bloom.)

As Adam lay a-dreaming beneath the Apple Tree
The Angel of the Fire rose up and not a word
said he.

But he wished a flame and made it,
And in Adam's heart he laid it,
Singing:— "Fire, Fire, burning Fire,
Stand up and reach your heart's
desire!"

(The Apple Blossom's set.)

As Adam was a-working outside of Eden-Wall,
He used the Earth, he used the Seas, he used the
Air and all;

And out of black disaster
He arose to be the master
Of Earth and Water, Air and Fire,
But never reached his heart's desire!

(The Apple Tree's cut down!)

A SONG OF KABIR

My brother kneels, so saith Kabir,
To stone and brass in heathen-wise,
But in my brother's voice I hear
My own unanswered agonies.
His God is as his fates assign
His prayer is all the world's — and mine!

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